

IN THESE TIMES

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UNDER FIRE

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VOL. 8, NO. 1

NOVEMBER 9-15, 1983

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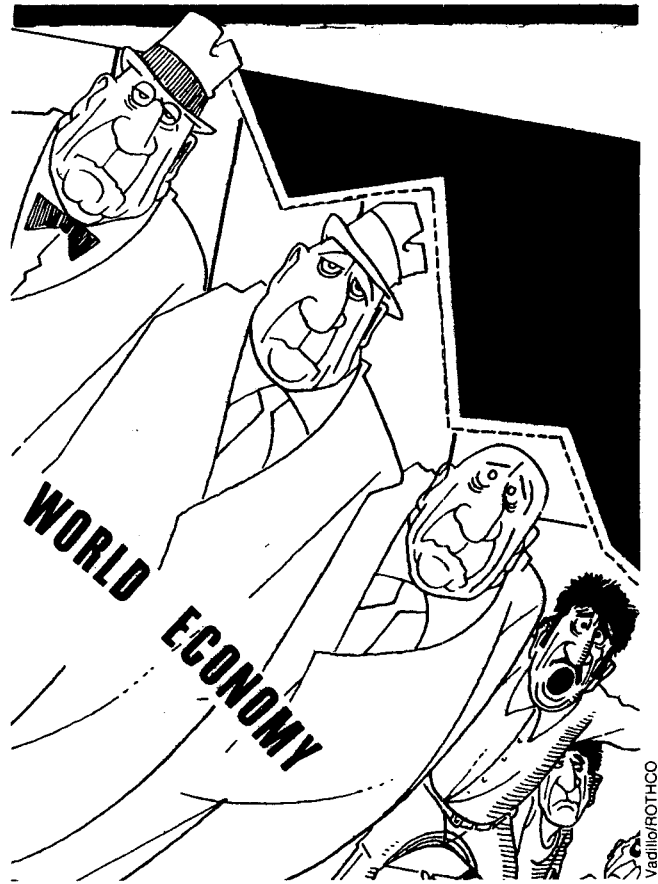
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U.S. forces plant the flag on Grenada.

THE INSIDE STORY



IMF austerity brews discontent in Brazil

By Mike McCullough

NEW YORK

Burdened by the largest foreign debt in the world and unable to afford either the economic or social costs of paying it off, Brazil faces a crisis of epic proportions. In order to qualify to receive the loans necessary to service its debt, Brazil's military government is submitting to demands by the world's debt police—the International Monetary Fund (IMF)—to impose austerity policies. These so-called belt-tightening measures not only aggravate human suffering but also worsen the economic conditions they purport to improve.

Everyone agrees it is an explosive situation. Depression level unemployment, rampant inflation and extreme hunger are pushing the country's 125 million people to the limits of tolerance. For example, in Sao Paulo, the country's major industrial center, unemployment has risen in the past five months from 300,000 to one million. In the absence of unemployment insurance and social security, the Catholic Church in Sao Paulo is urging every five families with jobs to support two families out of work.

National unemployment is estimated at 20 percent with 35 percent underemployed or earning less than what is deemed sufficient to cover basic expenses. This problem occurs against the backdrop of centuries-old inequity in the distribution of income. Last year, for example, the poorest 40 percent of the people earned only 8.5 percent of the national income while the richest 10 percent received more than half.

Record inflation rates are eating away at people's ability to make good with whatever income or savings they have left. The government has been cushioning the shock of inflation by adjusting salaries to the official rise in the cost of living. But between 1977-1980 food prices increased by 428 percent and salaries were adjusted by only 203 percent, less than half the rate of food increases. Since November of last year, the prices of five basic food products—rice, beans, milk, sugar and cooking oil—have risen by 250 percent whereas salaries were adjusted by only 90 percent, according to a recent study by the military government's own national security council. Octavio Bulhoes, finance minister under an earlier military administration, told a group of German businessmen in August, "I fear that, if there is not a rapid stabilization of prices, the public will lose the patience with which it has been confronting the suffering caused by inflation and will create a social revo-

lution."

With hunger plaguing the cities and countryside, people seem to have already lost patience. Starving people in northeastern states, now suffering their fifth straight year of drought, regularly invade towns and cities to demand or loot food. During the first weeks of September, angry mobs of people in working-class neighborhoods of Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro attacked and robbed food from butcher shops, grocery stores and supermarkets. More than 30,000 civil and military police were dispatched to the streets of Rio to contain the situation. Some believe that right-wing groups prompted the attacks on the supermarkets in efforts to destabilize the Rio de Janeiro state government of socialist Leonel Brizola, but there is no doubt that real hunger and frustration were at the root of the attacks.

Brazil is one of many Third World nations that fell victim in the '70s to excessive loaning by international banks and to a host of adverse economic conditions that have subsequently made it impossible to continue payments without emergency aid. IMF debt cops are currently on duty in 46 Third World countries. At stake for the major banks are billions in loans that, if not paid back, would leave them with little or nothing to return to their shareholders and depositors in the event of a run on the banks. This would mean the collapse of the traditional international economic system.

Brazil's role in the global debt crisis is pivotal. Its \$90 billion debt (unofficially estimated as high as \$115 billion) totals more than the entire world debt of 1970. Were it to default, Brazil alone could bring major banks to their knees. For example, Citibank has 73.5 percent of its capital tied up in loans to Brazil, Manufacturer's Hanover 77.7 percent and Chase Manhattan 56.9 percent. A Brazilian default could easily trigger defaults by other indebted nations, catalyzing an international collapse.

The IMF rushed into Brazil late last year when the military government informed IMF officials it was falling in arrears. The fund soon imposed its standard magic formula for recovery—decrease imports, increase exports, cut public expenditures by reducing employment and salaries. This plan is being defeated by the world economy and by its own ignorance. If anything, Brazil came through for the IMF earlier this year with a record trade balance. But the runaway value of the U.S. dollar, high international interest rates and domestic inflation, fueled in part by the IMF's demand to cut subsidies for industrial and agricultural products, have virtually cancelled out the value of the favorable balance. On a global scale, the most befuddled aspect of the IMF plan is to demand greater exports while at the same time prescribing across-the-board cuts in imports. Brazil is hard pressed to find willing importers of its products, especially in neighboring debt-strapped nations such as Argentina and Chile, where the IMF is also demanding import reductions.

A week before his September 2 resignation, the president of Brazil's Central Bank, Carlos Langoni, revealed to the *Jornal Do Brasil's* New York correspondent that the austerity goals demanded by the IMF would be "impossible to achieve by Brazil without the risk of social upheaval." Upon resigning, Langoni said he refused to sign the latest letter of intent to the IMF, claiming, as do many mainstream Brazilian economists, that its goals are unattainable. It is this letter upon which all current hopes for refinancing the Brazilian debt are pinned.

"Get out IMF!" and "Moratorium now!" are among

the most common graffiti appearing on the walls of Brazilian cities. Intense and widespread public opposition to the austerity measures has stemmed from the public view of the IMF plan as a form of economic warfare waged by foreign forces against the Brazilian people. The public debate, often occurring in the conservative press, ranges from calls for a unilateral moratorium on the debt payments—or delaying payments for several years—to repudiation of the debt or an outright break with the international economic system. The largest opposition party has formally adopted economist Celso Furtado's call for acting independently of the IMF and declaring a unilateral three-year moratorium.

The battle lines.

All the major ingredients of the current crisis are evident in the on-going struggle of the Brazilian congress against military decrees reducing the income of all wage earners. On July 13, the military government succumbed to intense pressure from the IMF to cut back on public expenditures and decreed that the salary adjustments of all workers would be reduced from 100 percent to 80 percent of the official inflation rate. This move outraged the nation, and a prolonged public debate ensued with mounting pressure on the congress to reject the decree. According to the military rules of democracy, it is possible for the congress to reverse a military decree up until 90 days after it has been issued. Countering pressures on congress to reject the decree was a threat by the leader of the pro-government party to close down the congress in the event of rejection, orders by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to suspend British bank negotiations with Brazil until after the vote and equally chilling tactics by the IMF and U.S. bankers.

In the meantime, union leaders threatened a general strike if the government did not cancel the decree. And even the usually loyal members of the government's own political party were swept away with the public groundswell against the measure. One pro-government congress member called the decree "criminal and inhumane."

Hours before the October 19 vote, in a last-ditch effort to intimidate the congress, the government assumed martial law powers confined only to the national capital of Brasilia. Nevertheless, the congress overwhelmingly rejected the decree. Since congress has officially refused to fall in line with the IMF austerity plan and the military has resorted to repressive tactics, at least in Brasilia, the scene is set for another showdown. To bypass the congressional rejection of the decree, the military has, as many expected, already issued another wage reduction measure. The congress will be unable to vote on this decree until it returns from its summer recess in March. This move and the military assumption of emergency powers in Brasilia are germs of a new political crisis.

Yet the crisis seems to be unifying the country with a sense that all Brazilians are victims of an unjust and inhumane international economic order. Due to this, many people feel certain that a civil war would result if the military attempted to reverse democratic gains made in recent years.

At stake for the Brazilian people is their freedom to act in defense of their own basic human interests rather than in the interests of international capital. And at question for the whole world is whether Brazil will be able to resume its role in Latin America as a principal catalyst and leader of the movement toward a fundamentally new international economic order.

IN THESE TIMES

The Independent Socialist Newspaper

(ISSN 0160-5992)

Published 41 times a year: weekly except the first week of January, first week of March, last week of November, last week of December; bi-weekly in June through the first week in September by Institute for Public Affairs, 1300 W. Belmont, Chicago, IL 60657, (312) 472-5700.

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IN THESE TIMES

By Jack Epstein and J.H. Evans

AS THE TWIN-ENGINE CESSNA approached Managua's Sandino International Airport in early September, the pilot radioed the control tower for permission to land.

Permission secured, the light plane began its descent but had no intention of landing. Instead, it fired two rockets, damaging the control tower, two hangars and the main terminal building. The craft, on an obvious suicide mission, was immediately shot down and its two pilots killed. The Costa Rican-based Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE) claimed responsibility. It was the first air strike against Managua since the 1979 civil war that ousted dictator Anastasio Somoza.

Within hours frogmen from the Honduran-based Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FND) led by former Somoza National Guard, decapitated a crucial flexible oil pipeline and offshore loading dock at Puerto Sandino on the Pacific.

A month later on October 11 FND speedboats rocketed and machine-gunned five large fuel tanks in Corinto, destroying 3.2 million gallons of gasoline and diesel and reportedly leaving Nicaragua with less than a month of petroleum reserves. The attack also destroyed medicine and food supplies and tons of coffee and bananas awaiting export.

These attacks were not just more hard blows by CIA-directed *contras*. They also represent a major shift by the Reagan administration to accelerate its drive to topple the Sandinista government by destroying Nicaragua's industrial, commercial and transportation facilities. Breaking from a policy of slow strangulation and hit-and-run insurgent attacks, the CIA has attempted a quick kill by cutting the nation's economic jugular vein.

Change of strategy.

After more than a year of small-unit border skirmishes in isolated rural areas, in which the *contras* were making little headway, the CIA decided a change of strategy was needed. They were not establishing themselves as a military threat to the Sandinista army. Instead, they were galvanizing popular support for the revolutionary government. Considering an impatient Congress, an upcoming presidential election and polls showing the U.S. public opposed to prolonged Central American military involvement, the Reagan administration decided that something needed to be done—and fast.

As early as March of this year a more aggressive attitude was evident. Suddenly the FDN marched into central Matagalpa province, advancing to as close as 60 miles from Managua. Simultaneously, Miskito Indians attacked on the Atlantic coast, and the first encounters between former Sandinista commander Eden Pastora's ARDE troops and the Nicaraguan army were reported. The U.S. media called it a probable invasion.

But Central American sources claimed it was more of a probe or testing action, and possibly a dress rehearsal for a future multi-frontal assault under a CIA-engineered unified command (see *In These Times*, April 6).

The apparent purpose of the attack was to gauge the Sandinista's mobilization capability and discipline, as well as the *contras*' ability to coordinate and sustain their own efforts. The Nicaraguan army appeared formidable and responsive, with a popular militia to back them up. From the CIA perspective, the Sandinistas needed to be considerably weaker before they would start to even teeter, much less topple.

In April both the FDN and ARDE accelerated their recruitment. Although it's unclear where these new *contras* came from, CIA officials testified to Congress that insurgent troops had swelled from 4,000 to 7,000 by May, 8,000 by June and nearly 10,000 in July. In May the Reagan administration complemented its military

During a year of border skirmishes, the contras made little headway.



Aiming for jugular in Nicaragua raids

activities by reducing sugar imports from Nicaragua by almost 90 percent, which had accounted for a crucial \$45-60 million annually in foreign exchange to the beleaguered Central American nation.

With the new tactics came new rhetoric. In a report to the Senate Intelligence Committee, the *contras*' role suddenly changed from the interdiction of arms to El Salvador to encouraging the Sandinistas to "modify" their behavior, both externally and internally.

In early July an outline of the CIA's plans were leaked to the press as the House of Representatives geared up to debate a bill to cut off covert aid. Whether the leaks were calculated or reflective of continuing policy differences inside the White House and State Department has not been firmly established. Regardless, the media learned enough to cite the expansion of covert operations as the

Nicaragua has an armed population. Any insurgency force will not only confront the army but also an angry and determined population.

most extensive since the Vietnam war, including a boost to \$43 million in aid to the *contras*, compared to an estimated \$30 million last year. By some accounts, the press investigation forced the CIA to speed ahead, despite not quite being fully prepared.

By the middle of July CIA officials testified that they intended to train, arm and supply up to 15,000 *contras*, twice the number of El Salvadoran guerrillas. Businessman Alfonso Robelo, director of ARDE with Pastora and Miskito leader Brooklyn Rivera, admitted in Costa Rica that his group would "like to see a coordination, a cooperation" with the FDN, and Pastora revealed that his troops had resumed fighting after receiving funds from unnamed sources.

Plans for the joint U.S.-Honduran

army and naval maneuvers involving 20,000 U.S. troops were announced, accompanied by press leaks of classified Defense Department documents that specifically called for the refinement and testing of plans for a naval quarantine of Nicaragua. On July 28 the House voted 228-195 to cut off covert aid, an almost empty symbolic gesture since the bill was not only ignored by the Senate, but also authorized \$50 million in overt aid to the *contras*.

The CIA timetable.

In August, a series of statements hinted at the CIA's timetable. Gen. Paul Gorman, commander of the U.S. Southern Command in Panama, told the press that 5,175 U.S. troops and 6,000 Honduran soldiers would train to stop infiltrators, counteract guerrillas and, most important, repel artillery and tank attacks. He added that the maneuvers would build toward joint field exercises in December.

In separate statements, the FDN told journalists that it expected to make a major push in November or December, and Robelo said that by December ARDE would link forces with Stedman Fagoth's Miskito troops fighting in the north in an attempt to seize control of the Atlantic coast. On August 23 U.S. warships carrying more than 16,000 military personnel appeared off both coasts of Nicaragua.

After that, the CIA turned up the heat:

- September 8—the twin engine Cessna 404, later traced by the *New York Times* to a CIA leasing company, attacks the Managua airport. That same day FDN frogmen hit Puerto Sandino, while 1,000 FND troops open an offensive along the northern border.

- September 26—Gen. Gorman announces that the U.S. military will build a network of roads in Costa Rica along the Nicaraguan border, matching similar construction in Honduras by U.S. servicemen.

- October 2—FDN official Edgardo Chamorro Coronel warns that Mexican tankers carrying petroleum to the Sandinistas will be sunk. (Mexico supplies nearly all of Nicaragua's fuel.) Esso Standard, a subsidiary of Exxon decides to stop leasing its tankers to Mexico. CONDECA, a Central American defense pact involving troops from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, defunct since 1969, is revived to confront "Marxist-Leninist aggression." Gen. Gorman represents the U.S. at the initial conference.

- October 3—The *New York Times* reports that the CIA resupplies the *contras* from El Salvadoran airbases. The Sandinistas shoot down a U.S. registered DC-3 ferrying supplies to *contras* inside Nicaragua. ARDE speedboats attack Benjamin Zeledon's fuel storage facility on the Atlantic coast and destroy 380,000 gallons of gasoline.

- October 6—FDN speedboats attack Puerto Sandino on the Pacific coast destroying 400,000 gallons of diesel fuel and gasoline along with the main pipeline and connecting an offshore oil platform to the onshore refinery.

- October 11—Corinto fuel tanks are destroyed. Henry Kissinger meets with Robelo in Costa Rica after refusing to meet with Salvadoran FMLN representative Guillermo Ungo in Panama. A member of the Kissinger delegation explains the discrepancy in policy by saying, "There are guerrillas and then there are guerrillas." Kissinger later confers with Ungo in Washington, D.C.

- October 14—FDN planes severely damage the repaired oil pipeline and loading buoy at Puerto Sandino.

- October 16—Reagan administration officials admit the CIA recommended and helped plan the fuel storage attacks and predict more strikes against indus-

It is likely that Reagan will face only muted congressional opposition should he decide to carry out his apparent plan.

trial installations.

- October 20—FDN engages the Sandinista army and militia in a northern village and causes more than \$2 million in damages; the death toll includes 32 civilians. Miskitos on the Atlantic coast using speedboats attack a freighter at Puerto Cabezas. The U.S. rejects the latest peace proposals by Nicaragua, as it has all previous offers to negotiate. The House votes to ban covert aid by the same majority as on July 28, and with the same stipulations. Robelo lobbies in Washington for continued aid and a slice of any overt funds and privately recognizes that the FDN must have a role in any post-Sandinista government.

- October 22—A newly inaugurated \$14 million geothermal power plant 34

Continued on page 6

IN SHORT

So sue them

Despite President Reagan's ideological vendetta against it, the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) has been saved from extinction time and again by the budgetary powers of Congress, which has voted the agency funding against the administration's dictates. Now, employees of the LSC are seeking congressional help in fighting what they term the "systematic dismantling of the program ...and continuing campaign of harassment [of] its employees" by the Reagan-appointed LSC Board of Directors. The board has carried on the Reagan administration's assault from within the corporation with rule changes designed to restrict LSC class action suits, tighten client eligibility requirements and de-fund local offices. In an open letter to Congress, the National Organization of Legal Services Workers (NOLSW) called the changes "regulatory abuse" and evidence of "destruction from within" by the conservative board.

The NOLSW, which recently petitioned the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to make District 65 of the United Auto Workers (UAW) its collective bargaining representative, is also charging that the current LSC leadership is harassing long-term employees on ideological grounds. Political pressure has resulted in the resignation or dismissal of career employees, the organization told Congress, who have been replaced by "unqualified people [whose] major qualification...is their ideological opposition to equal access to justice and the continued existence of [the LSC]."

The letter also noted that the LSC board hired a management law firm that numbers J.P. Stevens among its clients to challenge the NOLSW's District 65 certification. That should be no surprise. Reagan's most recent LSC board appointee, Robert Valois, was instrumental in J.P. Stevens' campaign against the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers' Union. Valois was profiled in a 1980 *Southern Exposure* story on prominent Southern union busters and, according to National Public Radio, an ACTWU spokesman responded to his LSC nod by saying, "Reagan could not have selected anyone worse."

Merger ahead

A lawsuit that threatened to block the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA) merger with the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) and almost forced the union into bankruptcy has been settled out of court, Lincoln Diament reports. An advertising jingle company that was put on an AFTRA "unfair list" after refusing to agree to use only AFTRA members brought the suit, which resulted in a \$10.5 million settlement and threw AFTRA into Chapter 11 bankruptcy. A similar suit was brought against SAG in 1982, and just over a year later the two unions settled out of court for an undisclosed sum of money. The settlement cleans the slate—the ad firm can't bring a similar suit again, the unions' right to order members not to work for non-contract producers is declared legal and, most important, the way is now cleared for a SAG-AFTRA merger.

Central America call-in

The most striking statistic in a June CBS News foreign policy poll showed that 75 percent of Americans are so confused by Central American politics that they don't know which side the U.S. government supports in El Salvador or Nicaragua. National Public Radio will attempt to fill that informational void with a call-in show November 19 at noon, Eastern time. "Crisis in Central America—A Guide for Working People" will feature State Department officials, academics, trade unionists and opponents of U.S. intervention in Central America discussing the situation there. The show is the fifth in a series sponsored by the Workers Policy Project (WPP) on topics including military spending and the economy, Social Security and the wage gap between men and women. Some 50 NPR stations will carry the Central America show, but Judy Rabinovitz of the WPP says non-NPR stations can air the program if they pay for a telephone hookup.

The year of living frugally

In a year that has seen signs of what partisan economists want to trumpet as economic recovery—falling inflation and rising productivity in some sectors—labor unions don't have much to be excited about. The Labor Department reported October 28 that union-negotiated pay increases averaged only 1.7 percent the first nine months of 1983, the smallest settlements recorded in the 15-year period the department has kept such statistics. The average increase was less than half the nation's 3.7 percent inflation rate, and the department reported that 400,000 of the 1.9 million workers the report surveyed took pay cuts. The last time the same workers bargained they won an average 9.1 percent increase, and private economists expect the concessions trend will be reversed soon. "Workers are not going to be willing to take cuts now that business is improving and profits are rising," one noted.

—Joan Walsh

SHOREHAM, VT—The apple harvest is almost over in Vermont's Champlain Valley and the 240 Jamaicans imported to pick the crop will soon be heading home. Yet for these foreign workers—as well as 1,500 others picking apples in the Northeast—the harvest was not as fruitful as it could have been.

Despite a court-ordered 17 percent wage increase, apple growers in Vermont and New England have refused to pay the higher wages. Instead, the growers are paying last year's wages while they fight the increase in court.

How Jamaican apple pickers came to New England orchards is a story complicated by federal regulation and shifting farm economies. To hear the growers tell it, the Jamaicans are simply doing a job few Americans want. Growers note that they must provide free housing and transportation, and they gripe about the morass of federal regulation they must meet before the workers are hired.

But the other side of the story is that the Jamaicans are an easily controlled, incredibly reliable workforce whose very presence in this country depends on their productivity.

If they can't pick fast, they're sent home. No union represents them and no Congressman calls to complain if they're mistreated. And while they're here, the Jamaican government keeps 23 percent of their earnings in non-interest bearing accounts back home. In years past, pickers have had difficulty collecting the deducted portions of their pay.

But this year, the Jamaicans have had trouble collecting even the higher wages ordered last summer by a federal court in Washington, D.C. Growers say the 17 percent increase ordered by the court and instituted by the Department of Labor is way out of line with cost of living increases and would drive many of them to bankruptcy. (The increase varies from state to state. In Vermont the 17 percent hike would raise salaries from a minimum of \$3.63 an hour to \$4.05.)

For Jamaican apple pickers, pay hikes don't grow on trees

While the apple growers challenge the wage rates in a Burlington, Vt., federal court, they have flatly refused to pay the higher salaries. They have, however, agreed to set up an escrow account in which the disputed portions of the wage would be deposited until the court decides the matter.

The Jamaicans, meanwhile, seem to know little about the salary dispute. At the Larrabee Point Orchard in Shoreham, where the eight Jamaican pickers call orchard owner Wesley Larrabee "boss" or "boss man," 17-year veteran picker Alex Wilmott was not overly concerned with the wage controversy.

Wilmott said he earns about \$225 a week, but that the wage may not be enough. "I wouldn't say we are real satisfied," Wilmott said. "But we are under contract and we came here to work and the price is set. We would be happy to make a little more because it is hard work."

The Jamaicans are brought in to this country under the "H-2" program, which takes its name from a subsection of the Immigration and Nationality Act. H-2 is the only avenue available for employers to legally import foreign workers. Unskilled farm laborers account for the largest group of the so-called "guest" workers. About 7,000 workers, mainly Jamaicans or other Caribbean islanders, are imported to pick apples or to cut sugar cane.

The program requires that the jobs first be offered to Americans. But domestic workers, like the foreigners, can be dismissed if they don't meet production standards.

These standards are often so tough that few unskilled Americans can compete against a trained and highly motivated foreign workforce. In Florida, for example, where several hundred unemployed farm workers signed up to cut sugar cane last year, only a handful lasted the entire sea-

son, and few Americans made it past the training period. In Vermont, one state official said he had referred almost 50 Americans to work in the orchards, but the percentage that actually stayed was "practically nil."

If Americans can't meet the grade, they are simply let go. But Jamaicans who don't make the production quota are deported—and with the deportation goes the chance to make more in six to eight weeks in the U.S. than in an entire year in Jamaica.

The rights of the Jamaican workers are supposed to be protected by the British West Indies Labor Organization, a quasi-government group representing the approximately 7,000 Caribbean laborers in this country. The labor organization is charged with making sure the Jamaicans are paid according to law and that the working conditions are safe.

Yet the organization falls short of the advocacy stance a union would take. It is not, for example, taking an active role in pressing for the higher wages, despite the Labor Department's mandate.

Noting that the higher wages were instituted after permission to import the workers had been granted, organization president Harry Edwards said, "What are we going to do? Tell the workers they shouldn't abide by the terms of the contract?" The dispute, he said, is a "matter between the Department of Labor and the employers," and Edwards claims his organization is not going to get involved.

For orchard owner Wesley Larrabee, the new wage rates "would not be crippling." But the increases must be stopped, he said.

"If they want to move the rate up at this percentage, then what's it going to be next year?" Larrabee asked.

—John Dillon



Thomas Nebbia, Nathan Benn

Nov. 12 Coalition gears up

By Barbara Schuler

OPPONENTS OF PRESIDENT Reagan's repeated use of military solutions to solve political global problems have long wondered just where he is going to stop. The extent of military adventurism he can justify in the name of national defense remains to be seen.

The disastrous recent U.S. military involvements do not seem to have taught the Reagan administration any lessons, and nowhere is this more apparent than in Latin America. "No more Vietnam wars!" the billboards along freeways in New York, Philadelphia and Washington plead: "March on Washington, November 12."

The march, which has been in the works unofficially since the spring and officially since July 7, was organized to oppose the administration's continued aggression against Latin American nations and to call for a fundamental reevaluation of the U.S. role in the region. Coordinated by the November 12 Coalition, a group of more than 70 organizations, this mobilization of opposition has been fueled steadily by recent events. The coincidence of the march following so closely on the heels of the invading U.S. Marines in Grenada seems fatefully appropriate to organizers.

They say they perceive an upsurge among those critical of U.S. intervention in Latin America as an increasing number of Americans refuse to be placated by Reagan's rhetoric justifying the intense military buildup in the region.

Beth Perry of the November 12 Coalition says that while it has made no official predictions for the turnout either before or since the Grenada invasion, she has noticed a decided increase in the number of phone calls from communities interested in sending buses to the march. Perry also indicated that recent events in the Caribbean have ignited sentiment on the West Coast, causing organizers in San Francisco and Seattle to abandon their original plans to travel south to the event in Los Angeles, and to stage marches of their own.

But the principal action will take place in Washington. The march, scheduled to begin with a rally at the State Department, will head to Health and Human Services and the Immigration and Naturalization Service buildings, which are both designated gathering places. The march will continue to the White House, with participants closing ranks at the ellipse. There, speakers including the Rev. Jesse Jackson of Operation PUSH and Dolores Huerto of the United Farmworkers, as well as several others yet unconfirmed, will address the crowd.

The activity of the past two weeks ups the ante for the coalition and presents a tremendous opportunity for mobilizing support. How the American public responds to the coalition's organizing efforts will help determine whether opposition to Reagan's militarism coalesces into a movement on a par with the Vietnam antiwar movement, or fades into relative silence.

"This is a test for us," says Perry. "The world is watching. We see November 12 as a gauge by which the administration will judge what kind of opposition exists in the U.S."

For this reason, the coalition feels a responsibility to mobilize as many participants as possible for the event. In the past several weeks it has distributed bumper-stickers and leaflets extensively and has set up a phone-bank system by taking names and numbers of those who have expressed interest when contacted on the street.

Although the Grenada invasion has become an obvious focus for the coalition's

efforts, organizers are quick to point out that U.S. actions in Grenada are symptomatic of larger administration policies in Latin America. Reagan's invocation of the Monroe Doctrine, although less proudly displayed, is nowhere more glaring than in Nicaragua. "We have to make the connection between Grenada and Nicaragua," Perry says. "The Nicaraguans have been saying all along that they're

expecting serious attacks in November.

At the same time that the coalition has noticed increasing vocal opposition to administration Latin American policy, opinion polls indicate that since the Grenada invasion Americans have rallied to the president's side. The official U.S. line has spread fear among Americans—a fear that apparently makes their appreciation



Grenadian immigrants oppose U.S. intervention

By Michael Powell

BROOKLYN

THE U.S. INVASION OF GRENADA has received both approval and condemnation from residents of Brooklyn, N.Y., the largest West Indian community in this country. Though a majority were opposed to the invasion, immigrants' reactions often seem divided along generational, class and political lines. Some 35,000 Grenadian immigrants live in Brooklyn's Crown Heights, Bedford Stuyvesant and East Flatbush, including relatives and friends of the murdered Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and of Eric Gairy, the man Bishop overthrew in 1979.

A smaller-than-expected group of 600 people demonstrated their opposition to the invasion Saturday, October 29, in cold sunshine at a Crown Heights commercial center. A mixed group of West Indians, most of them young, Rastafarians and white supporters decried the invasion as "illegal, immoral."

"I would never have dreamed that the United States would do this," said Lincoln Allard, 50-year-old leader of the United Grenadians of New York, supporters of former Prime Minister Bishop. Allard, a friend of Bishop's, had visited Grenada three times since the 1979 coup. "This invasion did not have our interests at heart. The students were just an excuse. I wanted to see the government that killed Bishop overthrown, but not at the cost of an invasion by America or at the cost of the lives of many Grenadians."

Allard's mixture of shock and anger was shared by many West Indians at the demonstration. Most had strongly supported Bishop, who was killed in a coup October 19.

Their opposition to the invasion is shared by Rep. Major Owens, whose 12th Congressional District includes most of Brooklyn's West Indians. "The

and a wasteful expenditure of resources and human lives," he said. Owens has joined the 21-member Black Congressional Caucus in demanding an immediate pull-out. His spokesperson, Ken Whitlock, said calls to his office are running two-to-one against the invasion.

Despite such angry reactions, it is uncertain where many West Indian and Grenadian immigrants stand on the invasion. Just minutes after most demonstrators marched down Utica Avenue on Saturday, 60 Grenadians gathered on the street corner to engage in a loud, free-flowing, often angry debate. About half of the participants supported the Reagan move.

"I have favored an invasion from the first day of the revolution in 1979," said Edward Dwarica, a middle-aged man who also opposed the Gairy government.

Cynthia Gairy, wife of the former prime minister and a prominent member of her local Catholic church, also reacted with joy at news of the invasion. "I don't think Grenadians think of it as an invasion, but rather as a rescue," she said. In a twist typical of the conflict on the island, Gairy shares her small brick house in East Flatbush with her "dear friend" Leslyne Coard, first cousin to Bernard Coard. He was the former deputy prime minister now accused of masterminding the toppling of Bishop. But Leslyne Coard, an adamant anti-Communist, has little sympathy for her cousin. She "hopes Bernard is dead or rotting in prison."

The divergence of views on Grenada is not a surprise. During the past few months, Rep. Owens and several neighborhood groups have held forums on Grenada, Bishop and his New Jewel Movement. These forums often erupted into angry verbal battles between supporters and opponents of Bishop. And the battle lines, according to several participants, were often drawn along lines of class.

"Bishop's base was among the women, peasants, youth and dissident union

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for the administration's muscle-flexing keen. In Reagan's October 27 televised address, he told the nation, "We got there just in time."

Reagan's strategy appears to have earned him support, and this likely was what he was after. But the administration may yet pay a price for this move.

Having tried to appeal to Reagan's sense of such values as workable democracy or self-determination has brought opponents of his policies limited success. Obviously, what matters to Reagan is re-election.

With this in mind, the November 12 coalition hopes to instigate a turnaround in U.S. Latin American policy by spelling out for the administration that its militarist policies are going to cost it in votes. ■

members, the very people that had been marginalized by the previous government," says Carolyn Somerville, a political science instructor at Hunter College, liaison to the Caribbean community for Rep. Owens and a recent visitor to Grenada. "Many middle-class immigrants, the professionals, disliked Bishop. But the poorer immigrants, the youth, and sometimes second-generation Grenadians in Brooklyn have great respect for, and pride in, the New Jewel Movement," she added.

Some Grenadians took a middle position between that expressed by Cynthia Gairy and those who condemned the invasion.

"I am very happy to see the nation restored to constitutional rule," said Roy Hastick, the president and founder of the 400-member Grenadian Ex-Policeman Association of East Flatbush. A 33-year-old ex-policeman from Grenada and the British West Indies, Hastick came to the U.S. in 1973. "There must now be an election within six months to restore faith, though. It is unfortunate it came to this. I would not have welcomed such an action against Bishop. He was popular and moving, I think, toward elections. But now—" his voice trailed off.

Eric Gairy seemed to be one of the few subjects on which most Grenadian immigrants agreed. Though Cynthia Gairy said her husband is talking of returning to Grenada, few immigrants here said they would support such a move.

"Many Grenadian and West Indian immigrants want to pursue something down the middle," said Jomo Deacon, a young, high-cheekboned Grenadian who expressed disappointment at the poor turnout for the Saturday demonstration. "They do not understand what the invasion means to our sovereignty. My mother loved Bishop but supported the invasion because he was killed. I try to explain to her that we must do these things on our own, but it is hard. She says this is easier."

In a radio address, Samori Marksman seemed to sum up many Grenadians' feelings. "We do not care if one group of leftists is fighting another group of leftists. All we care about is that our country has been invaded by a superpower that cares nothing for the right of our people to accept or overthrow their own government." ■

EUROPE

For allies, invasion complicates matters

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

SERGE JULY, DIRECTOR OF THE fashionable Paris daily *Liberation*, had the pained look of a doting parent whose spoiled child doesn't seem to realize that his latest prank is a federal offense. Slowly, carefully, July tried to explain. Across from him, spick-and-span U.S. Ambassador Evan Galbraith hopped imperturbably from one excuse to the next, like a little boy used to seeing his fibs swallowed indulgently by grown-ups.

The editor and the ambassador were appearing on French television for an impromptu debate in response to the U.S. invasion of Grenada earlier that same day. But it was not exactly a debate. July kept trying patiently to get Galbraith to understand that by sending the Marines to take over Grenada, the Reagan administration was making life very, very difficult for its European friends who have been promoting a pro-American view of

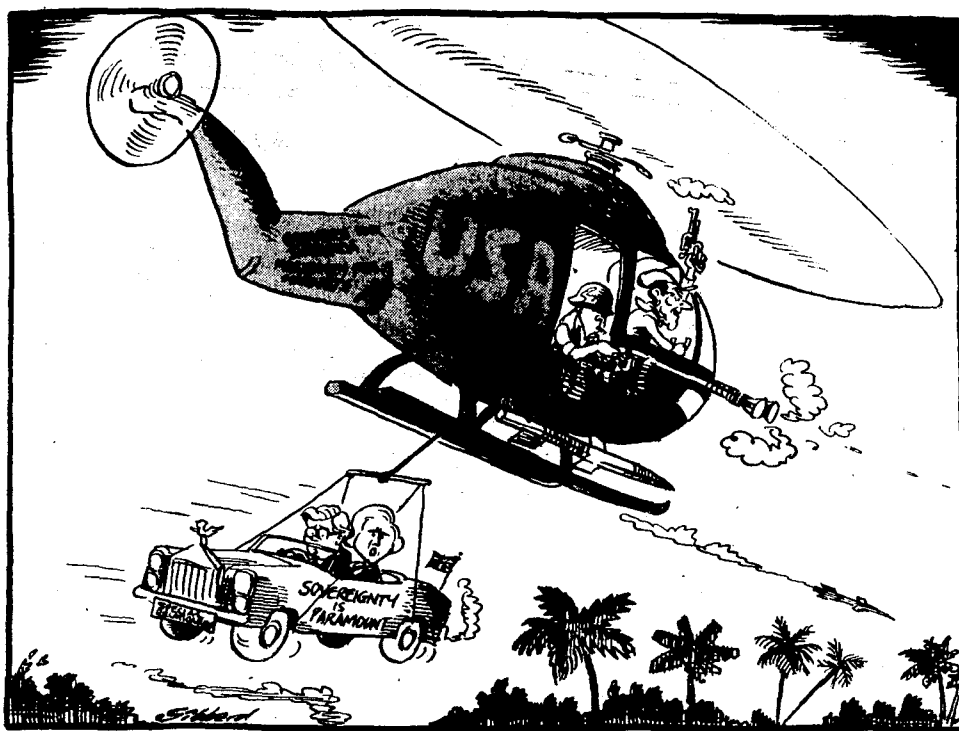
the East-West struggle.

July is one of these. A couple of years ago, he took full control of *Liberation*, which began as an expression of French revolutionary Maoism, and began steering it toward "modernity"—meaning, among other things, away from activism toward politics as a spectator sport. As a media trip, the Soviet Union is dullsville and obviously the villain, whereas the U.S. is just one hit movie after another. An intelligentsia that considers Jerry Lewis one of the great artists and social critics of our era was ready to go for Ronald Reagan. *Libe* has helped promote cultural Americanophilia, and the tendency to confuse Ronald Reagan with his youthful movie roles as typical American good guy.

Galbraith, although a banker, looks even more like a cowboy than Reagan. The *Solidarnosc* pin that he has worn at previous French TV appearances was missing from his lapel this time. He seemed slightly surprised only when July told him that the invasion of Grenada was a terrible sign of weakness. Weakness, sending in the Marines? He could not understand that. The U.S. did what it had to do to stop a bunch of "Marxist bandits."

Since none of the official excuses will wash, clever editorialists (*Le Monde*, *Liberation*, etc.) concluded that in Grenada the U.S. was trying out its new strategy of "horizontal escalation," responding to a defeat in one point of the globe—the Beirut Marine killings—with an easy victory in another. Not so at all,

Disregard for its relationship with the U.S. humiliated Great Britain.



"That's not a fair comparison—why in the case of cruise we guaranteed the right to use the handbrake"

retorted Galbraith, the Grenada invasion was planned two weeks before that event—an even more damning admission, if one stopped to think about it.

July lamented in *Liberation* that the invasion of Grenada could only encourage "pacifism," that dread plague that has spared France so far. A consensus has been built in France on the implicit assumption that by clinging to the *force de frappe* and to Uncle Sam, France could be spared involvement in war. The propagators of this illusion are getting understandably nervous.

Socialist International (SI) chair Willy Brandt strongly condemned the invasion as "totally incompatible with principles of international law." Grenada's debacle is also another milestone in the failure of the SI's policy toward the Third World.

That policy was meant to offer Third World reformists (or "revolutionaries") some alternative to U.S. hostility on the one hand and the disadvantages of Soviet aid on the other. Maurice Bishop's group

of young leaders were just what the SI had in mind. But as usual in such cases, European governments under U.S. pressure chickened out of helping finance the new Grenada airport Bishop wanted in order to tap the big European tourist market.

So Grenada turned to Cuba and Soviet aid, giving the American giant the pretext to feel "threatened" by this "military installation." Whether the Grenada ruling group got rattled by the impending U.S. attack and self-destructed on its own, or was incited to its fatal quarrels by some CIA-inspired Iago, the sad fact was that the Reagan administration had already largely succeeded in isolating the island.

The success of such measures as economic boycott explains Margaret Thatcher's fury at the invasion, which seemed quite unnecessary to experienced British imperialists. While the French government condemned the violation of international law, to Britain the humiliation was

Continued on page 12

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Covert

Continued from page 3

miles west of Managua is attacked and damaged.

• October 25—U.S. Marines and Army Rangers invade and occupy Grenada.

The next day CIA Director William Casey reportedly told the Senate Intelligence Committee that Nicaragua, like Grenada, is not immune from U.S. military intervention. To the Sandinistas, the invasion and Casey's statement confirmed what they had long been expecting. Nicaraguan army reserves and civilian militia were mobilized immediately upon receiving notice of the action.

"The U.S. is accelerating its aggression against us, and we believe they are ready to push for their goals," said Angela Sev-allos, first secretary of the Nicaraguan embassy in Washington. "The U.S. called an urgent meeting of CONDECA this week in Honduras. CONDECA could easily be used as a multinational force against us, the way Caribbean troops are being used in Grenada."

Further, despite the House vote Reagan will likely face only muted congressional opposition should he decide to carry out his apparent plan. Congressional sources, pointing to the prevailing anti-Sandinista mood in the capital, believe Nicaragua will face a war of attrition for many years to come, regardless of which party is in the White House. Meanwhile, the CIA will continue to pursue the overthrow of the Sandinistas with military and economic attacks.

That scenario depends upon the populace, which suffers critical economic deprivation, to rally around the *contras* ranks after a unified multi-frontal invasion.

"They hope to make the economy scream; soften them up and then overthrow them," said American University Professor William Leo Grand.

Another scenario is that the Sandinis-

tas, pushed into a corner, will attempt to clean out the *contra* camps in Honduras and Costa Rica by either sending in troops or utilizing its Soviet 152 mm cannons that hurl 100 pound shells more than 16,000 yards. Both would probably be declared acts of war and be considered justification for military retaliation, supported by the U.S. There are reports that the commander of the Honduran Armed Forces, Gen. Gustavo Alvarez, is eagerly awaiting such an opportunity.

But both scenarios leave the central facts out of the account. The FND and ARDE are wracked with internal divisions that jeopardize a sustained drive. While the Sandinista government has announced extreme rationing of food, clothing, medicine and fuel, the population knows who is to blame for their problems.

Also, Nicaragua is an agricultural country with a tiny industrial capacity. To sever Nicaragua's jugular would require destroying its staple crops of coffee, beans, rice and cotton, not simply its oil reserves. The Sandinistas fought for 20 years without heavy military hardware. Veterans of the revolution are more familiar with mules and horses than with gas-guzzling tanks.

"Ho Chi Minh didn't use trucks. Sandino didn't use trucks," observed retired Col. John Buchanan, who monitors Central American military affairs.

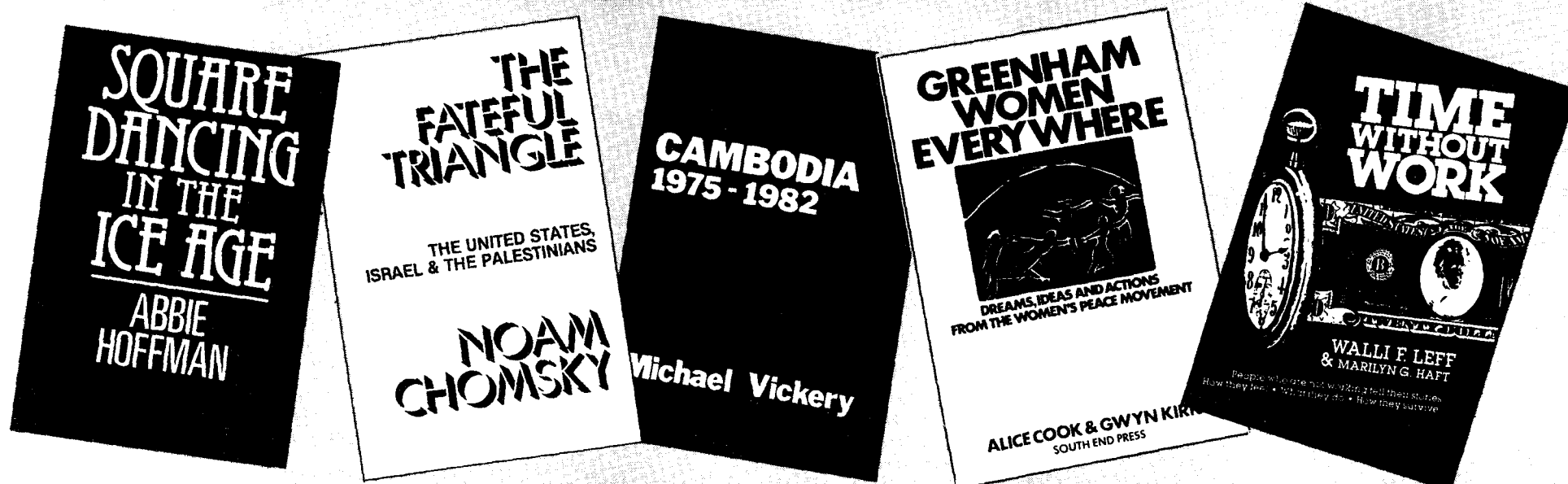
Above all, Nicaragua, like the U.S., and unlike most nations of the world, has an armed population. Any invasionary force will not only confront an experienced army, but will face an angry and determined citizenry. And even if a combined *contra*, Honduran, CONDECA and U.S. assault pushed the revolutionary government out of Managua, it would at most give them a precarious hold over the nation. The Sandinista leadership could regroup in the countryside and wage guerrilla war as they did against Somoza. In this case, the U.S. would only be creating more instability, bloodshed and tragedy for the region. ■

Jack Epstein and J.H. Evans reported on Central America for five months in 1982.

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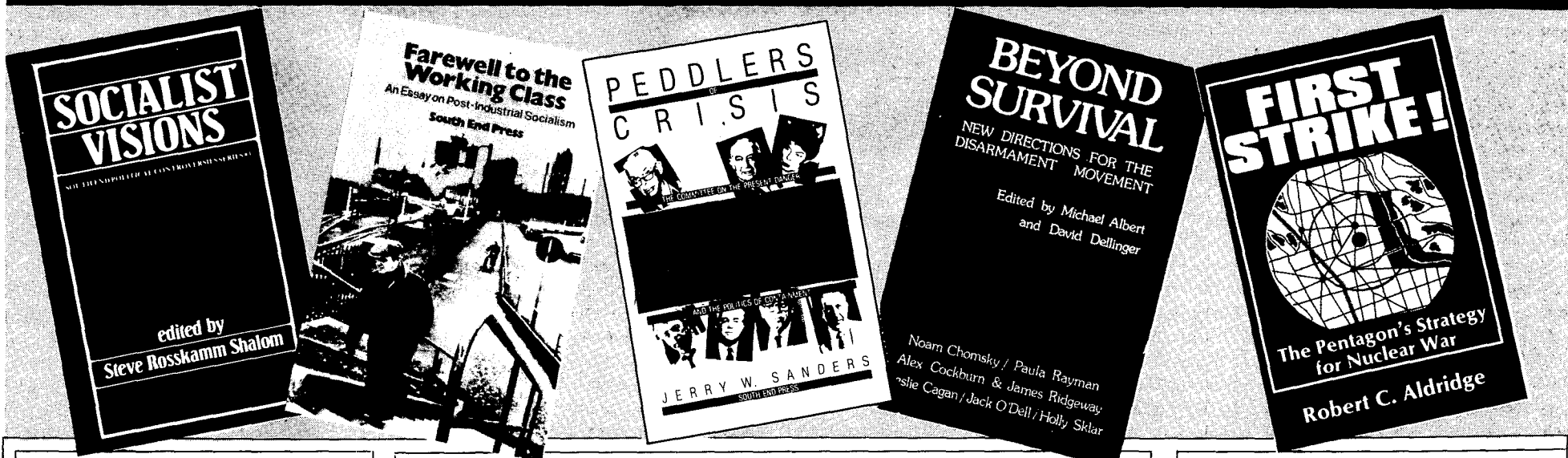
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GRENADA

Administration sees invasion as triumph of U.S. military will

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION has offered a succession of justifications for the American invasion of Grenada on October 25. And each attempt

at justification has been accompanied by citations of evidence as well as testimony.

On the basis of opinion polls taken after President Reagan's October 27 speech to the nation, it appears that the administration has succeeded for now at least in convincing the American public that intervention was necessary. But among Washington observers, including the national press stationed here, there is growing skepticism about the administration's motives.

As more of the interested parties have come forward to tell their side of the story, and as the press has finally begun to be allowed to inspect Grenada, a "credibility gap" similar to the gap that the American administrations suffered from during the Vietnam war has started to emerge.

Danger to students.

The administration has offered at least three justifications for its invasion. The first two were proffered by President Reagan and Secretary of State George Shultz in October 25 statements.

The first and most often repeated reason for the invasion was, in Reagan's words, "to protect innocent lives, including up to 1,000 Americans." Reagan and Shultz emphasized the threat posed to 650 medical students in Grenada at St. George's School of Medicine. The administration feared "another Iran" in which these Americans might be held hostage by a government hostile to the U.S.

The second reason was a formal request by five of eight nations in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) that the U.S. join an invasion force.

In his October 27 speech, Reagan offered a new justification—not cited in his earlier statements, but hinted at by senior State Department and Defense Department officials. This was that Grenada "was a Soviet-Cuban colony being readied as a major military bastion to export terror and undermine democracy." According to administration officials, the invasion prevented not only "another Iran," but also "another Nicaragua."

Withering in the light.

Each of these rationales fares poorly under scrutiny. The question of the medical students' safety must be broken down into two separate questions: first, were the medical students in danger? And second, if they were in danger, was an invasion necessary to remove that danger?

So far, the evidence of a threat to the students is inconclusive. Several students said upon returning to the U.S. that they felt themselves in danger and were grateful to have been rescued. But other students, the vice-chancellor of the Medical School, Dr. Geoffrey Bourne, and bursar Gary Solin said the students were in no danger. Bourne said that he received personal assurances from Gen. Hudson Austin of the students' safety and of safe passage if they wanted to leave. Solin said, "We were used as an excuse by the government to invade Grenada."

On the eve of the invasion, parents of medical students at St. George's sent Reagan a telegram urging him to proceed cautiously. And the American-based chancellor, Charles Modica, initially said that the administration was "very wrong" to invade Grenada. After a Pentagon briefing, Modica changed his tune.

On Sunday, October 23, U.S. Embassy counselor Ken Kurze had lunch with Leon Cornwall, a Grenadian government leader. Afterward, Kurze told reporters that "we have not recommended [to U.S. citizens] that they leave—or that they leave at any particular time."

But assuming that the students were in danger, could they have been evacuated without an invasion? After the invasion, Reagan administration spokesman Larry Speakes claimed that the Grenadian airport had been closed on October 24,

the OECS nations the way it has with the Organization of American States, the OECS nations had no legal grounds for intervention. Article 8 of the OECS treaty calls for "arrangements for collective security against external aggression" and stipulates that decisions on this article must be unanimous.

In Grenada's case, there was no "external aggression" since Grenada is a member of the OECS. The decision to ask the U.S. to intervene was not unanimous—three of the eight states abstained from the decision. And within the larger body of Caribbean states—the Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM)—seven of 13 states opposed the invasion, including Trinidad and Guyana.

Evidence also suggests that the U.S. actively encouraged the OECS nations to request intervention—so that the U.S. could use the request to justify its actions. In his October 25 statement, Shultz said the U.S. did not develop any invasion plans until October 20, after Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop was murdered. But Thomas Adams, the prime minister of Barbados, one of the OECS nations, said that the U.S. had approached him on October 15, four days before Bishop's death, with an offer to provide transport for an invasion force.

A Jamaican official told the *Washington Post* that American officials had been urging military action against Grenada on the Caribbean nations for several months. The State Department denied these reports, but its own spokesman Alan Romberg inadvertently admitted,

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It adduced two kinds of evidence for this conclusion.

The first is a narrative of events in Grenada, popularized by its neighbors, that claims Bishop's murder was part of an attempt to make Grenada more receptive to a Cuban or Soviet takeover. The second is a variety of physical evidence on the island, including the alleged presence of 1,100 Cuban soldiers (doubling as construction workers), sufficient arms, in Reagan's words, "to export terror" and an airport under construction by the Cubans the purpose of which is said to have been military rather than commercial.

Bishop's Grenadian government was closely allied to Cuba and the Soviet Union. It received considerable aid from both countries and backed the Soviet Union internationally, including during the 1979 United Nations vote on the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Whatever Bishop's intentions, the ruling oligarchy appears to have been a typically brittle first-generation dictatorship in which succession could occur only by imprisonment or assassination. But no evidence has been presented to support a claim of a Soviet-Cuban takeover.

From the testimony of Cuban officials and of former officials of the Bishop government, Cuba's Castro was particularly close to Bishop and was angered by his assassination, even to the point of announcing that Cuba was re-evaluating its relations with Grenada. There is no evidence that either Cuba or the Soviet Union conspired to kill Bishop. Rather, his assassination seems to have been the



which prevented any Americans from leaving. But reporters since learned that at least four charter planes took off from the Grenadian airport that day, including one carrying the former director of the Reagan administration's National Commission on Social Security, Robert J. Myer.

Both Canada and Great Britain had arranged for commercial planes to evacuate any of their citizens who wanted to leave Grenada. A spokesman for LIAT Airlines, the only commercial airline serving Grenada, said its plans to land on Grenada were not blocked by Grenada but by its neighbors, who were already planning to invade.

Caribbean neighbors.

The administration's second reason—that, in Reagan's words, the "small peaceful nations" of the OECS "needed our help"—has also wilted upon examination.

The U.S. has no treaty obligations with

during a briefing, that the U.S. had had discussions about possible military action with the Caribbean nations on October 15. Romberg later tried to amend his statement.

The State Department also acknowledged that Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Charles A. Gillespie was present at the OECS meetings held October 21-23.

At the very least one can conclude that the U.S. did not act simply in order to "establish law and order," in Shultz's words, after Bishop's assassination, but had other motives for invading Grenada. At most one might conclude that the OECS request, like the purported danger to the American medical students, was a mere pretext for an American invasion.

Soviet-Cuban colony.

The Reagan administration introduced the specter of Grenada becoming a "Soviet-Cuban colony" only after its first justifications for invasion began to unravel.

result of an internal power struggle within the Grenadian ruling party.

It has also become clear that the U.S. grossly exaggerated evidence of a Cuban-Soviet military presence in Grenada. In an October 28 briefing, Admiral Wesley L. McDonald, commander in chief of the U.S. forces in the Atlantic, said that the U.S. had uncovered 1,100 troops and that the invasion had prevented "a Cuban occupation of the island." On October 29 Pentagon officials reduced their estimate to between 700 and 750—precisely the number that the Cubans claimed were on the island.

In his October 27 speech, Reagan claimed that American forces had uncovered three warehouses of weapons, one of which was "stacked almost to the ceiling" with weapons and ammunition, "enough to supply thousands of terrorists." When reporters visited the warehouse the next day, they found that it was about a quarter full, with 190 crates of

Continued on page 12

LETTERS

In These Times is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

BOSTON MAYORALTY

PETER DREIER'S AND BOB KEOUGH'S "Perspectives" combined with various letters and responses over the past two months have aired the range of opinions on the democratic left in regards to the Boston mayoral race. But *In These Times* hasn't reported Boston Democratic Socialists of America's (DSA) position on the campaign.

In July, the Boston Democratic Socialist Political Action Committee (DSPAC) voted 22-13 in favor of a mayoral endorsement of Mel King. This fell two votes short of the required two-thirds majority needed for endorsement. (The 13 no votes were for "no endorsement.") City Councilor Ray Flynn did not request a DSPAC endorsement.)

While several DSA members have played a prominent role in the Flynn campaign, others organized one of the largest first-round fundraisers for the King campaign. DSA National Vice-Chair Manning Marable and Mel King spoke at a 225-person fundraiser organized by "independent democratic socialists and progressives for King." The affair netted more than \$2,000 for the King campaign treasury.

After the first round primary, DSPAC voted 25-2 to endorse Mel King for mayor. In addition to plugging members into the King field operation, DSPAC will be hosting a fundraiser at which DSA National Co-Chair Michael

Harrington and Mel King will be featured. The fundraiser will be held Wednesday, November 9 from 5:30 p.m. till 7:30 p.m. at Satch's, 43 Stanhope St., Boston. We hope to meet many *ITT* readers at this benefit.

—Julie Johnson, Jim Marzilli,
Joseph Schwartz
Boston Democratic Socialist Political
Action Committee

NO BARGAIN, KRIEGER

I'VE HELD OFF FROM WRITING, FEELING that the debate was endless, and we all knew beforehand what the letters will say. However, Nancy Krieger's self-defense (*ITT*, Oct. 12) chilled me to the bone.

I had cringed upon reading Morris Alexander's letter about "real Jews," as if such things existed, like "real women" or "real men." Nevertheless, I must join him in asking exactly how Krieger views herself and Jews. Me-thinks the lady protesteth too much. If anyone wrote about any ethnic group of which they were not a member with the vehement hatred and disgust with which Krieger describes Jews, I would be reading a ferociously racist column.

First, a word about "Zionism," a much maligned word that perhaps should read Jewish nationalism, which, as has been noted repeatedly, is a legitimate right denied to Jews by much of the world. Its stigma, I believe, is due to

its links in some minds to colonialism, a question that causes me much agony as a believer in social justice. Israelis and Palestinians each as a people deserve dignity, land, sovereignty, cultural freedom; to this end I greatly favor territorial compromise. I cannot adequately express nor summarize here the complex emotions and considerations that enter into dealing with this issue. I do not, however, believe the Jews were colonizers in the usual sense, as there were Jews in the area all along, and because many emigrated there out of desperate need for some protection of their lives.

Perhaps the Jews' long stay in the Diaspora ran out their time on a statute of limitations on territorial return so that in the eyes of the world their return to the Mideast is illegitimate, based on flimsy Biblical imperatives. Yet the fact that Jews had no country of their own made them susceptible to devastatingly brutal anti-Semitic attacks in every country in which they lived. Why might not they indeed have a haven to which to flee? Why must they be eternally fated as aliens?

Fie, fie on Krieger for likening the Zionists to Nazis. The Zionists knew the only way to avoid even greater slaughter was mass emigration. Bless them. I ask any right-thinking person (I don't mean to propagandize) to imagine himself or herself in a circumstance with no way to escape from sure death except for flight to Palestine. How feeble, how sickly humorous of Krieger to suggest that the Jews, while being stripped of all human rights, including that to life, be fighting the Nazi war machine's immigration laws! Perhaps they should have nominated a congressional candidate, too. How long would they have lived while "fighting" these "laws" (decrees denying all liberties issued by a dictatorship are "laws"?). Krieger is rewriting a reality lived by a generation that is now aging and not vocal.

Krieger calls upon anti-Semitic material to create more anti-Semitism, a curious and sobering phenomenon. I am

re-articulating my own identity as a Jew as a member of New Jewish Agenda, where we struggle to find humane positions on the Mideast. I do not feel that all Jews must so identify, but everyone has that right, and it must be preserved. In this light, Krieger's letter stinks of self-destruction. She has denied herself this right.

—Grace Flisser
Philadelphia

ROSENBERG FILE

THE NATION'S RESTRAINED BUT EFFECTIVE deflating of the Weinstein thesis in support of the Radosh-Milton Rosenberg File should be the occasion for *ITT*'s readers to ask where the paper is headed.

The editor and publisher of *In These Times* gave himself more than three full pages to attempt to prove that the Radosh book (in which he is an important actor) is "the definitive word on the case." He also gave one page to three (of "some half-dozen") letters challenging his thesis. These he answered with some disputation, some plain assertion and some ideological polemics.

My letter was one of those not printed. Was that because I eschewed ideology and motives and limited myself to content of book and review? Perhaps Weinstein did not like my pointing out that the *San Francisco Chronicle* did not find the book convincing. Now Victor Navasky, the *Nation*'s editor, has reached the same conclusion. Are both to be dismissed as "ideologically encumbered"?

If I follow Weinstein's reasoning that the book "does great service to the left," it means that the book renders this service by throwing discredit on the American Communist Party. To one who witnessed the Party's role in the Depression and the rise of the CIO while recognizing its mistakes, that is a strange historical judgment.

Navasky, on the other hand, sees clearly that the main effect of the book is that two "self-advertised lefties have found the Rosenbergs guilty" (his words) thereby drowning out the fact of a conspiracy of government, judge and prosecutor to commit judicial murder (my words, not Navasky's). In brief, a non-ideological conclusion is that the book helps the cold warriors and damages civil liberties.

—Victor Pasche
San Francisco

Editor's note: In writing that Radosh and Milton have done a service to the left whether their findings are right or wrong, I was trying to make the point that it was important for the left to be able to explore its history non-ideologically. I believe the Rosenberg File is an important contribution to this process. I also believe that its conclusion is correct. The way in which the case was used to further the Cold War is not at issue. We all agree on that. But the fact that the case was an instrument of Cold War politics does not mean that Julius Rosenberg was not involved in espionage. Both Victor Navasky's and Pasche's conclusion about the book seems to me to be ideological. In the first case it implies and in the second it states that there are some things that shouldn't be explored. Further, the facts, so far, are that the only ones to draw Pasche's conclusion are those on the left who think this is a question outside the pale.

WATT'S IN STORE?

I AM WRITING IN RESPONSE TO THE Tom Turner article on James Watt (*ITT*, Oct. 26). The article is insightful and informative but, I believe, it gives too much credit to Watt. The "credit" should go to Reagan.

It may be dangerous if we lose sight of the fact that Watt was merely carrying out Reagan's policies. He may have done so with relish, and in his own inimitable style, but he was doing Reagan's bidding nevertheless.

—Mary H. Mocino
Oakland, Calif.

IN THESE TIMES

'TIS THE SEASON

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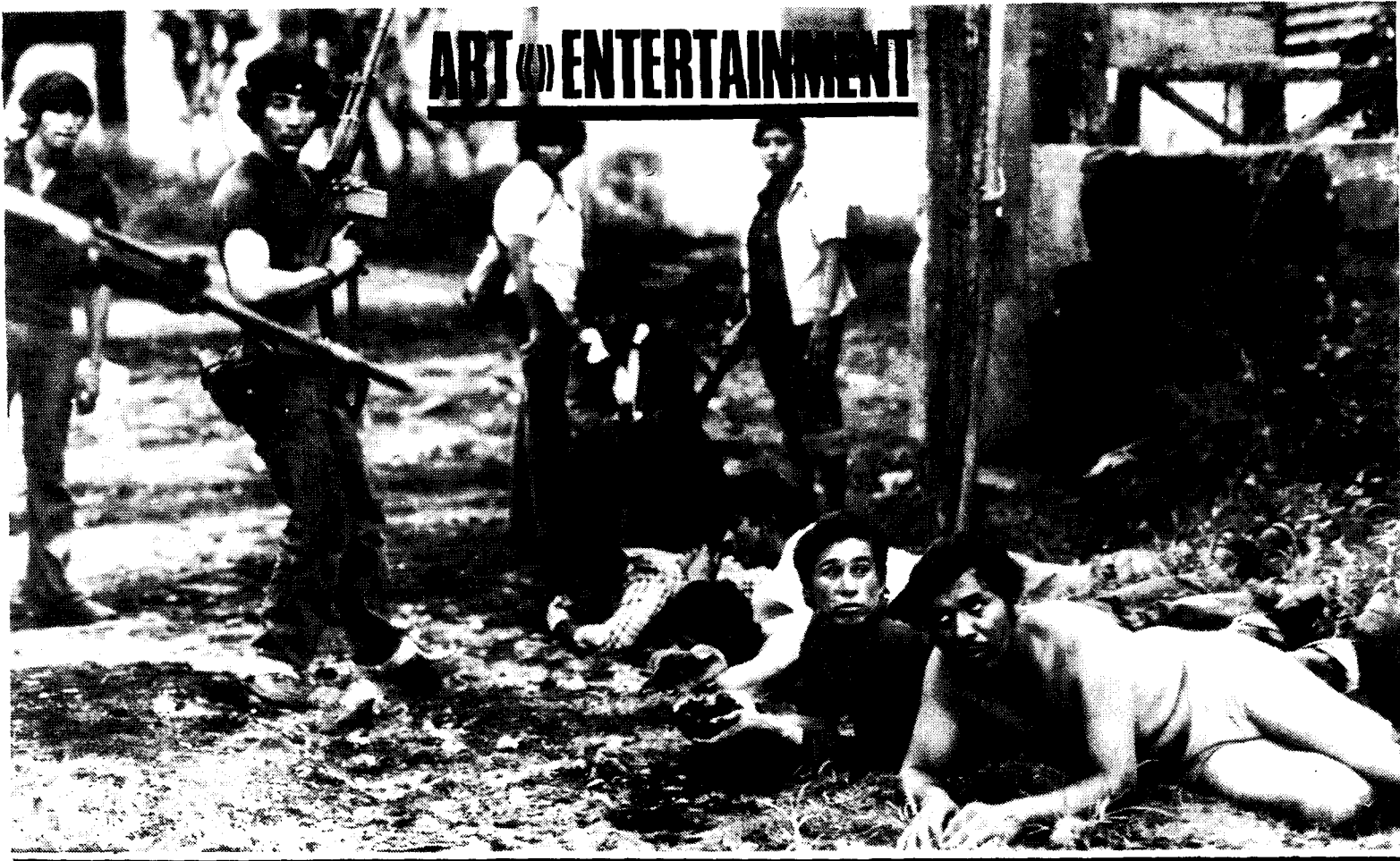
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The "muchachos" of the 1979 Revolution, photographed here by John Hoagland

the revolution.

The scale of the revolution in the film is all wrong. You don't get the feel of a whole nation rising up. The same dozen masked youths seem to capture every town, the same 50 refugees walk all the roads. The Red Cross burn two bodies to stop the spread of infection. Only in conversation does it come out that 50,000 have actually died.

When Somoza's forces started shoving 500-pound bombs out the doors of helicopters onto crowded neighborhoods in eastern Managua, the smoke and concussion rolled across the city. One morning in Leon I counted 200 plane-launched rockets hit the town between 8:00 a.m. and noon. In *Under Fire* a few pyrotechnic torches and a DC-3 are used to represent the air war.

In the film the war slowly escalates while reporters hang out in nightclubs. In reality, the curfew, general strike and automatic weapons fire were a constant presence for most of the summer. Reporters' drinking habits were finally restricted to what they could purchase at roadside looters' markets. The background music was not soft Indian flutes but "Stayin' Alive" and "Do You Think I'm Sexy" played along with lists of the dead and missing on local commercial radio stations.

The final victory in the movie looks like they were pushing budget and had to cut back on extras. Nolte and Cassidy agree that getting involved was the right thing to do, but then they drive off in the middle of the celebration.

The real victory celebration was scary. Fifty thousand exhausted people, gunfire, cathedral bells ringing, hundreds of people jammed along the roof-lines as the crowds chanted and sang. Columns of guerrillas arriving from the southern front, Matagalpa, Leon, Esteli. I'd lost 25 pounds from amoebic dysentery, I had a bullet hole in my jeans and my tape recorder kept jamming. John Chapman kept shooting film sick with Malaria. Richard Cross (who died this summer at the Nicaragua-Honduran border when his car struck a land mine) was rubbing tears from his eyes between shots. You couldn't have pried us out of that overheated crowd for love or money or a case of Flor De Cana rum.

David Helvarg covered the Sandinista revolution for *In These Times*.

By David Helvarg

UNDER FIRE

The way it really was

Photographers John Hoagland, Richard Cross and myself were the only reporters in Leon, Nicaragua, the week it fell to the Sandinistas. It was the first town taken in the Nicaraguan revolution of 1979.

We were pinned down in a movie theater facing out on the central park (*Heroes*, starring Henry Winkler, had been the last show to play there). We were with 25 *muchachos* (kids) as the guerrillas were called. In order to escape, they would have to set fire to the telephone exchange

across the street. A group of Somoza's National Guard were on the roof of the building directing tank, mortar and automatic weapons fire on us.

There was a small window on the ground floor. The *muchachos* threw molotov cocktails at it but they kept missing. Finally they called out for Rolando.

From the auditorium behind us appeared a young, long-haired man of about 20. He was wearing a baseball cap and striped shirt. He picked up an unlit molotov and pitched it through the window. He threw three more unlit molotovs, lit the fifth and tossed it. The ground floor of the telephone exchange exploded in

jungle border with Nicaragua, we attempted to follow an armed band of Miskitos being protected by a Honduran army squad. A young soldier, who earlier had been polite and friendly, abruptly turned serious and ordered us to stop. When we cautiously ignored his authority, he leveled his M-16 at us. We halted.

Random violence, death.

The most precise statement in the film is that death is sudden and arbitrary. Our moments of potential danger all happened outside Nicaragua, which we believe to be the safest country in the region. That attitude, especially after a chilling encounter when Honduran soldiers threatened us and burned our files near the Nicaraguan border heightened our empathy for the revolutionary struggle. Yet, it didn't blunt our research into events embarrassing to the Sandinistas. Our own struggle was to prevent our professional integrity from being eclipsed by ideological sentiments. That ultimately got us expelled from the Nicaraguan Atlantic coast for "asking the wrong questions to the wrong people."

Yet this is the romance in being a foreign correspondent. Normally your life is not on the line. The work of real journalists is often tedious, and not depicted in *Under Fire*: trudging from one interview to the next, clamoring for time with inaccessible ministers, poring over economic documents, listening to harangues by polemicists and embassy officials, filing stories and arguing with each other at a local watering hole.

J.H. Evans and Jack Epstein reported from Nicaragua in 1982 for *In These Times*.

Sympathies strain the objectivity of nearly all reporters

By J.H. Evans and Jack Epstein

Fifty-thousand people died in the 1978-79 Nicaraguan war. More than 100,000 were disabled and upward of 750,000 became dependent upon food assistance. There was also \$1 billion in material destruction from which the country is still recovering.

Nobody can remain immune to that sort of carnage. In *Under Fire* most journalists are portrayed as cynics, who are sensitive to tragedy only as an element in a good story. There's truth in that, but it's certainly not the truth.

The suggestion that only one photographer and his reporter paramour were traumatized by the violence, bloodiness and terrorism inflicted by Somoza's National Guard is a distortion equal to the film's creation of Rafael.

While *Under Fire* is an entertaining fantasy with its heart in the right place, it is not historical fact, nor is it, from our experience, accurate journalism.

Although we were never actually fired upon, we believe that a more honest characterization would be that most correspondents are greatly influenced by what they experience. When you live among the people of a nation, enjoying their hospitality

and sincerity, you're bound to develop an affinity for their version of history. Although you realize they often see you as a propaganda tool and try to manipulate your perspective, you're still affected.

After two months in Nicaragua last fall, hearing about "Somocista" attacks and witnessing a jubilant third anniversary celebration of the revolution, our objectivity had been altered.

This is why it's essential for reporters to move around and interview the opposing sides in a conflict—including CIA funded counterrevolutionaries, as we did. In our case they were Miskito Indian refugees who, armed and supplied by the Honduran army, were attacking Sandinista outposts on the Atlantic coast. After three weeks with them we were impressed with their courage, intelligence and efforts to manipulate the press. Thus the dividing line between good and evil, clearly defined during the Sandinista insurrection (and still existing between them and their Somocista adversaries) became blurred and increasingly complicated.

None of this, however, made us openly partisan in the manner of Nick Nolte's photojournalist in *Under Fire*, although we had ample provocation. Once, in a remote area near the Rio Coco

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BOSTON, MA

November 9

Join Michael Harrington, National Co-Chair of DSA and Mel King, Boston mayoral candidate, at a Democratic Socialist Political Action Committee Fundraiser for the Mel King campaign. Harrington and King will speak on "The Rainbow Coalition: Building It Across the Nation." Satch's Bar, 5:30-7:30 p.m., 43 Starhope St. near the John Hancock Building in downtown Boston. For information call 426-9026.

TERRE HAUTE, IN

November 12

1983 Eugene V. Debs Award Dinner, honoring Studs Terkel, presentation speaker Joe Glazer, "Labor's Troubadour." Reception at 5:30 p.m., dinner at 6:30 p.m. Award presentation and acceptance address to follow dinner. Hulman Civic Center, Indiana State University. Tickets \$15.00 per person. For information call or write: Eugene V. Debs Foundation, P.O. Box 843, Terre Haute, IN 47808, (812) 232-2163.

NEW YORK, NY

November 29

"In Solidarity with the Right to Rebel: Spotlight on Chile and Poland." With Ariel Dorfman, author of *Widows* and *The Empire's Old Clothes*, and Daniel Singer, author of *The Road to Gdansk*. 7:30 p.m. at Public School 41, West 11th St. and 6th Ave. Donation: \$3.00. For information: Campaign for Peace and Democracy/East and West, 301 W. 105th St., #2R, New York, NY 10025, (212) 222-9703.

Europe

Continued from page 6

the Reagan administration's disregard for the U.S.'s "special relationship" with Britain. *The Guardian* editorialized that "Mr. Reagan's greatest admirer in the Western World," that is, Thatcher, and her Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe turned out to be "irrelevancies when Mr. Reagan sees something he wants."

The *Guardian* editorial said, "Grenada may prove a devastating blow to America's eventual influence.... [A]t a stroke it throws any moral arguments about Afghanistan into the trash can of history. It fatally infects perceptions of the Lebanon situation. It kicks European susceptibilities about missile deployment and good intentions into the gutter. From the inside, working out, it may have seemed a sweet, applause-worthy move. From the outside, working in, it is a disaster."

The Grenada invasion powerfully reinforces the argument of those who have been trying to make Europeans understand that the new supposedly "NATO" missiles will be wholly American weapons that the U.S. may use at Europe's peril in total disregard of European wishes. ■

Grenada

Continued from page 9

guns. Some of these guns were modern Soviet rifles, but others dated back to the 19th century.

As for the airport, it was financed by the British and the European Economic Community, as well as by the Cubans.

According to the British *Sunday Express*, a spokesman from Plessey Airports, which had signed a contract with the Grenadian government to manage the airport, said the airport was for civilian, not military use. A British government official said the airport did not have the usual facilities found on military airports, such as protected fuel dumps.

On October 28, the administration held a closed briefing for members of the Senate Intelligence Committee to support its claim that Grenada was on the verge of becoming a Soviet-Cuban colony. After the briefing, not only the Democrats on the committee—Senators Pat Moynihan of New York and Patrick J. Leahy of Vermont—but also several Republicans, who refused to be identified by name, told the *New York Times* that the administration had not convinced them. Leahy summed up the committee's sentiment by saying, "The general attitude on the committee was wait and see. There isn't sufficient information yet to make an informed judgment, and what is available keeps changing. Every time someone from the administration speaks, there seems to be a new total for the number of Cuban troops in Grenada."

Administration intentions.

Even though none of the administration's declared reasons for invading Grenada stands up in the light of day, that does not necessarily mean the administration did not invade for those reasons. As was the case with the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, the U.S. has previously acted on the basis of faulty intelligence. But there have been sufficient statements from unnamed senior officials to suggest another rationale.

The administration took office with three abiding preoccupations. The first was the conviction that global power was

based on military force. That force need not be used, if the threat of its use was credible. Reagan Republicans believed that under Presidents Nixon and Carter American military force had ceased to be credible. They believed that the U.S. was perceived, as one senior official told the *New York Times* last week, as a "paper tiger." To become credible force had to be used, even if only in a minor engagement.

Second, the administration believed the U.S. was losing the global battle to Communism. During the 1980 election, Republicans often cited the countries that had been lost to "communism" in the previous decade. The Reagan administration was determined upon taking office to reverse the tide.

Third, the administration views each part of the world as an East-West battlefield. The Caribbean and Central America are, in effect, one area within that battlefield. The principal focus has been Central America, but the administration has been preoccupied with Grenada and, after its revolution in 1982, with Surinam. It was looking for the means to "send a message" to this region that the U.S. would not tolerate any kind of revolution, no matter who initiated it.

Grenada fit administration designs perfectly. It allowed the administration to use its military force. As one senior official told the *New York Times*, "What good are maneuvers and shows of force if you never use it?" It knocked one "communist" state off the map. And it sent a message to revolutionaries in Central America and the Caribbean. Surinam got the message quickly. In the wake of the American invasion, it expelled the Cuban ambassador.

Whether the invasion will finally succeed depends on several broader considerations. The first, of course, is whether the U.S. will succeed in preventing the spread of revolution in the area. In the short-term, the invasion will certainly damage the revolutionary cause by making the Cubans, the guerrillas in El Salvador and the Nicaraguan government

more cautious. They will be careful not to provide another excuse for American intervention.

But in the long run, the invasion of Grenada, like the invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965, may do more to turn the region and its people away from the U.S.

The second consideration is whether the Reagan administration can maintain public support for an interventionist foreign policy. The invasion of Grenada was made more palatable by public outrage over the death of 225 Marines in Lebanon, but if the occupation of Grenada drags on, the initial support the Reagan administration received for the invasion is likely to melt away.

The danger to Reagan could be read in the same opinion polls that declared majority support for the invasion after his speech. When the *Washington Post/ABC* News poll asked respondents whether the U.S. is "trying to do too much with its armed forces overseas," 48 percent said it was and 49 percent said it was not. Prior to the speech, 58 percent said the U.S. was trying to do too much and only 39 percent disagreed. As the untruths spoken by Reagan emerge, public sentiment is likely to swing back the other way.

The third consideration is the invasion's overall effect on the East-West balance of forces. It can be argued that administration gains in Central America and the Caribbean are easily countered by losses it is suffering in Western Europe and elsewhere. The invasion has reignited the movement against the installation of the Pershing and Cruise missiles and cast a cloud over political unity in NATO.

During the Carter administration, the contrast between American human rights policies and the Soviet actions in Afghanistan and Poland had shifted the moral balance toward the U.S. The Reagan administration had squandered this advantage until the Soviets shot down Korean Airlines flight 007. But now, in the eyes of the world, the U.S. invasion of Grenada has put the superpowers back on equal footing. ■

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November

6

1945—HUAC begins an investigation of seven radio commentators. HUAC spokesperson: "The time has come to determine how far you can go with free speech."

1968—At an RMN victory party, advance man J. Roy Goodearle: "Why don't we get all the members of the press and beat them up? I'm tired of being nice to them."

1976—Disclosure of Operation Shamrock: since 1947, RCA Global, ITT World and Western Union International have made international telegraph traffic available to the NSA.

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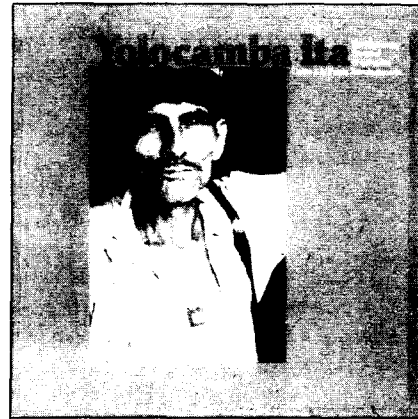
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INPRINT

One Day of Life

By Manlio Argueta

Aventura Original, Random House, 215 pp., \$6.95 paper

By Pat Aufderheide

Imagining El Salvador—the people, the life, the culture—seems impossibly difficult for us. Between rhetoric and atrocity, the pulse of a culture is lost.

Reagan and his advisors, of course, only see Salvadorans as dupes and stooges of imperial rivals. Liberals and leftists, meanwhile, slip them easily into the well-worn "victim" category. Even fellow Latin Americans from more industrialized countries often have a patronizing contempt for the people of countries for which the term "banana republic" was coined.

There are no strictly political solutions for this—it is a cultural problem. And it is an area where the capacity of art to vivify the humanity of others can play a critical role. That is one reason to be grateful that a new paperback line of international fiction, Vintage's Aventura, debuts this fall with *One Day of Life*, by Central America's leading novelist. The novel recounts one horrifyingly typical day in the life of a Salvadoran peasant family.

Another reason to be grateful for the reissue of Manlio Argueta's novel is closely related to the first. *One Day of Life* has a story-telling force that makes it literary news as well. As with much of the interesting new international fiction, literary and political news are part of the same process. This novel's vitality is drawn from the energy that fuels the changes in its characters.

Argueta has given voice to people who traditionally have been both inarticulate and silenced. He has made it impossible to pretend that lives are not only being lost but also *lived* in that region known to Reagan as our soft underbelly.

El Salvador at dawn.

Argueta is an intensely controlled writer, whose intentionality surfaces as simplicity. The structure of the novel is sparingly efficient. It begins at 5:30 a.m. one morning in Chalate near the capital city, and it ends at 5 p.m. in the same peasant hut. The events of the day are dramatic and exemplary—there is a tense and anguishing confrontation between the National Guard and the women of the family. Memories, stories and a gradual explanation of references to previous incidents and to people now absent or dead extend the narrative. Twelve hours are enough to learn about three generations worth of Salvadoran history, from the viewpoint of the participants.

The incidents that punctuate that day and that history have the ring of grotesque truth. Peasants demand fair prices on agricultural goods, staging a rally at a bank. The Guards then hunt them down, trapping a bus that has picked up some of the demonstrators and incinerating all the passengers. Peasants also take over the cathedral, looking for asylum.

National Guardsmen hunting subversives in the countryside hack up the body of a peasant organizer and post his head on a stick, bringing his mother to

identify it. They torture another man and regale his wife with stories from the torture chamber. They track down a young girl and confront her with the half-dead and mutilated body of her grandfather.

Conflict appears in the ever-more-bizarre ways Salvadorans get through a day. Men not killed or "disappeared" by the paranoid and vicious Guards sleep in the hills for safety, sneaking back home for occasional glimpses of their children and for a hasty meal. The young generation run traditional errands such as going to the store and minding children, as well as more modern ones—smuggling food into the occupied cathedral, petitioning the authorities at the jail for word about their relatives and making sick calls on the newly mutilated.

Recounting all this are several first-person voices that speak to the reader. The central one belongs to Lupe, the family's matriarch. Others belong to her daughter Maria Pia, her granddaughter Adolfinia and to Adolfinia's friend Maria Romelia. In counterpoint to this family chorus are two monologues from National Guard members.

Testimonio.

The style borrows from the form of the *testimonio*, the first-person account so popular in recent Latin American literature. The Brazilian slumdweller Carolina Maria de Jesus' *Child of the Dark*, Bolivian tinminer Domitila's *Let Me Speak* and a great deal of Cuban literature mark the genre. It is a powerful vehicle to tell what has not been said before, by people who have not been listened to before. (This also explains the flourishing of oral history in Depression-era social research projects and recent social history.)

The witness that these characters bear has the authenticity of any real-life account and perhaps more, because Argueta's style allows the characters to interweave their pleasures, regrets and tendernesses into the testimony. Lupe's voice is remarkable for its trusting directness. It is easy to forget Lupe is a grandmother, because her voice is ingenuous. The spiritual world of her childhood stays with her, even as she confronts the latest foreign-issued automatic weapon.

Her life story is filled with tragedy. She sees the deaths of siblings due to malnutrition and the death of her child in the struggle to do something about a world where infant starvation is normal. But before telling you any of that, she shares the sensation of awakening in early morning to

Argueta describes a process that, while political in its conflicts, is also profoundly cultural. Peasants who once thought the conditions of their lives immutable now claim dignity as social beings.

MANLIO ARGUETA

ONE DAY OF LIFE



Banned by the government of El Salvador, a major work of literary imagination that reveals the human drama of politics in Central America today

A

FICTION

Imagining a day in the life of El Salvador

familiar patterns of light through the walls of her hut and the warm feeling of lying in bed with her beloved husband Jose.

The voices of the young are different—less luminous and less attuned to the natural world, more assertive and more emotionally flat in recounting their run-ins with "the authorities." This generation has been raised up with the awareness of themselves as social beings, which Lupe didn't discover until adulthood. They were also raised amidst open conflict.

In spine-shivering contrast to these women's voices are the mad rantings of the Guards, whose bodies are stuffed with foreign protein and whose heads are stuffed with imperial fantasies liberally mixed with Protestant millennialism. They speak with an ignorance that is a descendant version of Lupe's luminous naivete.

Argueta has done more than create characters—he describes a process that, while political in its conflicts, is also profoundly cultural. People who once thought the conditions of their lives were immutable now claim themselves as social beings with a right to dignity.

In a comment that echoes the observations of educator Paulo Freire, Lupe says, "For me everything was part of nature.... I used to believe in these things. If one is poor, well, that's life... until we began to discover the meaning of the word exploited." When she talks about the way her massacred son Justino used to love fine shirts, she says, "Young people nowadays are different: they enjoy things, although now men are in greater danger." The two facts go together, of course.

The current crisis has its roots firmly in Salvadoran soil. "And then the priests changed"—that simple phrase of Lupe's explains part of it. When the priests changed, so did the peasants. There is also the growth of peasant and communal organization that supplant, for the men, their former social life of drinking and gambling. In an attempt to stop the inevitable social change that comes with self-respect, the traditionally brutal authorities become rapacious.

The sense of living history created here makes it possible for Argueta to also make real the excruciating violence of daily life. Comprehending that violence is as impossible for us to imagine as the life of Salvadorans. Elemen-

tal questions about the quality of civilization itself in such a climate quickly arise from the shocking headlines. How can people perform such perverse and barbarous acts, and how can their targets endure it without becoming subhuman?

Horrors to comprehend.

One Day of Life is full of horrors, and what happens is unforgivably cruel, but not incomprehensible. Even peasants who have long been accustomed to fierce brutality from "the authorities" come to see the unimaginable—for instance, the sight of their local priest lying bleeding in the road, with a stick up his anus. They ask themselves, and each other, how the Guards—local boys, after all—can do what they do.

Only when the Guards themselves talk does an answer emerge. They, like Lupe, started out unaware of their own humanity. And that ignorance made them vulnerable to becoming machines of terror. The military offered them not only enough to eat but a kind of self-respect—a different kind than liberation theology did.

A melange of foreign advisors and local elites (who might as well be foreigners to them) teach the soldiers simultaneously to hate themselves and to think of themselves as saviors. "All civilians are shit, brother, you're no exception," they are told. They envy our uniforms, the fact that we've gotten ahead in life. That's why when it's time for us to take action we don't spare anyone."

This historical moment poses new challenges to the fiction writer. Argueta has here given us new maps of pain. For instance, Lupe explains that with a disappeared person "they kill two birds with one stone: all of the living who revolve around the disappeared are chained to anguish. And anguish is a slow form of death." The novel reveals those maps, however, without defeatism. The pain it describes is predicated by strength and growth. Those who can feel pain also feel warmth, gratitude and joy. In the face of terror, people stubbornly perform small gestures of companionship—as when Adolfinia brings animal crackers to Maria Romelia after they both escaped the burning bus.

There are also powerful links of love, especially between Lupe and her husband, who lives with her always, even when she is pretty sure he is dead. There is, finally, the constant assertion of the whole in the part. These women incorporate the missing men of their families into their daily lives, just as they incorporate all the absent, the missing and the dead.

Out of this suffering comes enormous hope. Lupe puts it very simply. "We're having a better time of it. Why better if they beat us more than ever? Because now we know where we're headed. And they know that we know where we're headed. This explains the conduct of the authorities."

"We don't brag about it. But we're marching on."

"Jose Guardado accompanies us."

A different version of this review appeared in the *Village Voice Literary Supplement*.

PERSPECTIVES

Reagan: to hell with the Constitution

By Eldon Kenworthy

THE BATTLE FOR NICARAGUA is on. As the *Washington Post* reported September 29, the CIA told the *contras* it was "do or die." Either they demonstrate a capacity to undo the Sandinistas or Congress would cut off their funding. (Telling advice: the more successful an illegal action, the more likely Congress will let it proceed.)

On October 16 the *New York Times* revealed that the CIA was doing more than teaching the *contras* the facts of American political life. "The Company" improvised a new strategy for the exiles and equipped them for carrying it out. What had been mainly a land war—with the *contras* unable to penetrate very far—suddenly became a sea and air war. Unprecedented attacks on Nicaraguan oil depots resulted. While the Secretary of State still claims he is only trying to pressure Nicaragua into realistic negotiations, by eliminating at one blow all but one month's supply of that country's oil, U.S. goals seem more consistent with Under-Secretary of Defense Fred Ikel's September pledge to prevent the "consolidation" of the Sandinista regime.

In more than two years of trying, the Reagan administration has failed to convince the press, academic specialists, and most allies in and outside the hemisphere that the Sandinistas take orders from Moscow or Havana and export their revolution through arms trafficking. An accurate reading of the evidence is that the Sandinistas largely do what they say: focus on the domestic problems of an un-

Intervention in Nicaragua is illegal, demeans us and, given the evidence the administration has provided, is uncalled for.

derdeveloped and war-torn country, while hoping that similar revolutions triumph elsewhere. The Sandinistas have not imported Soviet planes or missiles nor joined COMECON or the Warsaw Pact. Frequently they have given up territory rather than carry their counterattacks into Honduras. According to reputable journalists, Sandinistas have contributed no more than "a trickle" of arms to El Salvador's rebels for more than two years. In short, it is difficult to characterize Nicaragua's foreign policy as anything but "correct," given the extraordinary pressures to which that country has been subjected.

The Sandinistas do function, however, as a sovereign government. They permit the Salvadoran rebels offices on their soil (as Washington does Cuban and Nicaraguan rebels). They have developed their own schedule for elections, their own norms for dealing with dissent. In foreign policy and in overseas backing, Nicaragua's government is nonaligned. Two-

thirds of the foreign economic credits received since the triumph of the revolution down to mid-1982—the latest date for which I could find reliable figures—originated in Latin America, Western Europe or in international lending agencies. Mexico has emerged as Nicaragua's major supplier.

A fair characterization of the Sandinista regime, then, is nonaligned, internally oriented, Marxist—to which other adjectives could be added: pragmatic, nationalist, Catholic. It is not a rogue regime, not a major violator of human rights (as are some neighbors to the north), not an international outlaw.

The real issue.

The battle of Nicaragua comes down to this: is nonaligned Marxism permitted in this hemisphere, a Marxism that does Washington little harm, that in fact bends as far as sovereignty will allow to reassure the world power to the north that its hegemony is not in jeopardy? Is a revolution in a tiny country whose GNP is dwarfed by Woolworth's annual sales permitted to develop its own agenda for development?

What exactly does Reagan want? His maximum objective is to overthrow the Sandinistas. The minimum: to reduce socialist Nicaragua to "another Albania," an alternative other Latin American societies will ridicule, not copy.

Present U.S. actions pave the way for surrogate forces to attempt to depose the Sandinistas. Recent air and sea attacks by *contras* using equipment supplied by the CIA—airplane registries have been poorly laundered due to the haste with which this operation was put together—may also be intended to reinforce ultraleftists among the Sandinistas. For once the Sandinistas accept the Soviet MiGs long offered them, Washington can rush to the OAS to invoke the Rio Treaty while U.S.-supplied Honduran troops receive a green light to join the *contras* in invading Nicaragua—a tidy "regional solution" that puts few U.S. soldiers at risk.

Should U.S. allies fail to come through or should the Sandinistas suppress their anger enough not to take the bait, there is still the "Albanian" option: a Nicaragua that "proves" how distorted Marxism is. To assure this, a U.S. economic blockade already is taking hold.

Why should Washington care so much? Is it that Reaganites cannot distinguish nonaligned socialism from Soviet satellite? Their pronouncements suggest as much. How, then, do they understand the governments of Spain, Greece, Portugal and France? Or China, for that matter. Has it escaped their attention that Marxism is the language of opposition in much of Latin America, as it is in southern Europe? Ideological rigidity may be the explanation, reinforced by the Reagan team's cynical reading of U.S. public opinion: that it too has no patience for distortions.

In this regard, the public has not been served by liberals who don't contest this blurring. In his response to Reagan's address to the joint session of Congress last April, Democratic Senator Christopher Dodd conceded that "Marxist states in Central America" are unacceptable.

What the Reagan administration says goes beyond a simple invocation of "world communism," however. Congress and the public have been warned that U.S. credibility will suffer if, here in our own sphere of influence, precisely among societies so obviously vulnerable to our power, we do not "prevail." Others—never-named influentials in distant

capitals—will think us over the hill, think we have not recovered from Vietnam, if we act magnanimously, accepting for example the diplomatic solution provided by the Contadora countries.

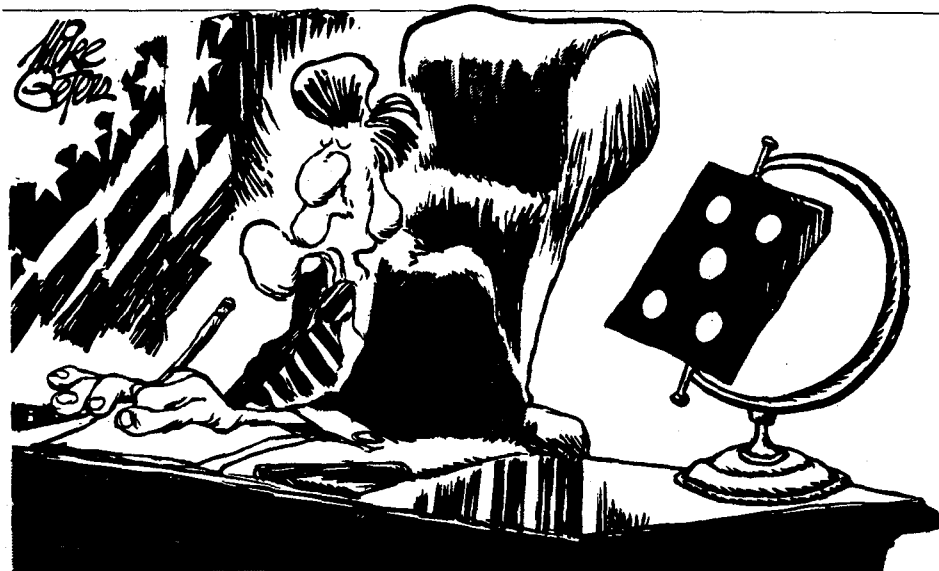
Through the CIA operation, Reagan also claims he is supporting "freedom fighters" who will return the Nicaraguan revolution to its original project. By delaying elections until 1985, a decision made for plausible reasons within a year of their taking power, the Sandinistas supposedly betrayed both their revolution and their commitment to the Organization of American States (In Reagan's rewriting of history, the OAS handed the Sandinistas their victory.) Leftists who have indulged in heavy judgments of the Sandinistas, in these pages and elsewhere, may now watch their words return to them in Reagan's caricatured concern for democracy.

So where does this leave us? At this moment Nicaraguans die on their territory because we here, in the States, have been

by the Nicaraguans but instead debates how the Sandinistas treat the Sunday broadcasts of the Archbishop of Managua.

So ground gained in the aftermath of Vietnam slips away, valuable ground bought with blood. Claiming "secret intelligence," the administration withholds facts central to judging its policy. Naval and ground "training maneuvers" bring thousands of U.S. troops close to battle zones—Gulfs of Tonkin waiting to happen. The War Powers Act is ignored. Dominoes are resurrected while Marine recruits keep cadence with "See the family by the stream; I'll drop my bombs and hear them scream." Meanwhile, Macy's advertises Calvin Klein's "military-wise" fashions. "Know how to conquer and win in our newest shop."

As Congress considers CIA funding for the new fiscal year, there may still be time to voice the central truth that this country has no business attacking a small nation that has done us no harm; that



outflanked by an administration easier to ridicule than combat. By not insisting on the distinction between Marxist and Soviet, liberals have undercut their plea for pluralism and in the process allowed a dominant myth of the Cold War to go unchallenged. Leftists have joined liberals in a debate on the qualities of Sandinista rule, when the real issue was and remains non-intervention: our government's behavior, not theirs'. Specialists in foreign affairs have tip-toed around "credibility" when that Kissingerian concept is largely a hoax, a convenient rationalization to convert any foreign situation into a "vital interest" of the United States. In the resulting confusion, Congress no longer asks for hard evidence of improper international conduct

such action demeans us, is illegal and, given the evidence the administration has provided, completely uncalled for.

This undeclared war violates both the letter and the spirit of the Constitution (article 1). Equipping others to fight such a war for us is no less illegal (U.S. Criminal Code, title 18). Such unilateral intervention by a powerful nation into the internal affairs of a weaker one makes a mockery of international law, including treaties the U.S. has signed with Latin American states. Every senator and representative should be asked the question the Nicaraguan foreign minister recently put to a New York audience: "Is this a government of laws?"

Eldon Kenworthy teaches government at Cornell University.

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Dateline

Continued from page 16
center of it—say, Peter Lilienthal's *The Insurrection* or Miguel Littin's *Alsino and the Condor*—it seems to slide off most viewers' entertainment map, into the mental Siberia of political or educational movies or, even worse, into the dreaded zone of propaganda.

So *Under Fire*'s central focus on the heartthrobs of the press corps is not in itself a mistake. In fact, it leads to the film's most insightful characterizations and vignettes, exposing the callous ignorance of most media people to their subjects. For the drinkers around the hotel bar, this drama and tragedy is just grist for their media mills.

White man's burden.

No, the problem with *Under Fire* is less the focus on the foreigner than with what

the foreigners do. Russell Price becomes the savior of the revolution. He carries the white man's burden in his camera case.

To give him that heavy load, the filmmakers have to fix up history to fit the movies. They invent a charismatic leader for the Nicaraguan revolution, Rafael whose closest (but still distant) counterpart in reality is Carlos Fonseca Amador, one of the founders of revolutionary front FSLN.

From this movie you'd never know that the Sandinista movement had many leaders and groups—the resulting coalition government was, after all, no accident. You would never even guess that the Sandinistas had their own photographers (they had an entire press information division, in fact). For *Under Fire*, south of the border politics is simple. It's one strong man losing out to another—Somoza to Rafael. If the revolution had depended on a single man and a single photograph, then Price's choice would make a certain sense. But it didn't and it doesn't.

Russell's fake choice is not only insulting to Nicaraguans, but also to the many journalists who have managed to be true to both their craft and their consciences in Latin America (see page 14). Indeed scrupulous attention to fair reporting—which sometimes means hefting heavy equipment into dangerous terrain to give the other side the same high-quality image that the government gets—is one of the most taxing ways to support the cause of justice.

Underpinning *Under Fire* is the Biggest Lie of all—the all-encompassing importance of the media in politics. Price's faked photo is so important because image is everything. The picture of Rafael will do as well as the man himself. While it's true that information is critical and influential in politics, it isn't the same thing as politics. And although *Under Fire* gives us a savagely critical view of the journalists' pretensions to objectivity, it swallows their sense of self-importance completely.

The filmmakers clearly didn't mean to be this cynical or arrogant. In fact, you can see them trying to slip some real in-

formation into their action-feature format. When Russell asks Claire to brief him on the war, she starts to tell him about the Marines invading Nicaragua in 1912 and the peasant revolution led by Augusto Sandino before he asks her to get to the "real stuff"—how many brands of beer there are in this country. But these nuggets of information don't fit anywhere in the plot—they just decorate the action.

This movie, which Reaganites will deplore as pro-Sandinista propaganda, is also one that makes Nicaraguan supporters seethe. But it does represent something authentic—the latest fashion in imperial angst on Third World issues. It feeds on a general anxiety about our relationship to all those conflicts in places we can't quite visualize. That's why it dares to refer to a real revolution instead of making up some place called, say, San Cristobal. But that anxiety is turned into newfangled American heroics. Even though the Third World may no longer be merely a stage, the Third Worlders are still only bit players.

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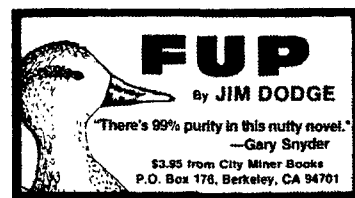
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By Pat Aufderheide

Under Fire takes aim at the most glamorous of the media crowd, the international press corps who track down Third World conflicts. And its misfires are as interesting as its hits.

Like West German filmmaker Volker Schlöndorff's *Circle of Deceit* and Australian Peter Weir's *The Year of Living Dangerously*, it scratches an ever-more-familiar itch in the audience—the sense that those funky, dirty foreign wars have something to do with us. It's a "problem" movie about an urgent problem (the same one that J.M. Coetzee's magnificently troubling novel *Waiting for the Barbarians* addresses): what is the relationship of the humane imperial citizen to those the empire labels barbarians?

But *Under Fire* may exemplify the problem better than it addresses it.

Photographer Russell Price (Nick Nolte) is a man who—like the American mercenary (Ed Harris) that pops up whenever he goes—shoots for hire. "I don't take sides," he says, "I take pictures."

His only real world of reference is that of his press corps buddies. His best friend is Alex Grazier (Gene Hackman), a TV news correspondent who's sick of it all—not so much Third World wars, he says, as "Third World elevators."

Alex decides to go home to a fat salary as a network anchorman. "My vocal inflections will be more important than who controls Congress," he says cynically to longtime lover Claire Stryder (Joanna Cassidy). When he leaves, the field is clear for Claire and Russell to fall in love.

Together they cover a revolution that turns out as neat as they expected, in some ways. ("Cheap shrimp and a good hotel," are the standards.) In other ways, it's messy and ugly. While the poor die from brutal National Guard attacks during peaceful demonstrations, the rich party and conspire to get richer. As the revolution builds, so does the foreigners' outrage at injustice.

When Russell causes the death of a baseball-player-turned-revolutionary by refusing to take sides, he can't sleep all night. Then the revolutionaries take him to meet their elusive leader Rafael, in order to counter Somoza's announcement of the leader's death. Rafael, however, really is dead and the revolutionaries ask Russell to fake a photo showing him alive. They fear their movement will falter on news of his death, and that the U.S.—holding up military support to Somoza because his downfall seems imminent—will send more arms.

Russell and sidekick Claire agree to do it, and the photo enters history.

His good deed soon backfires. Alex returns to Nicaragua, hungry for an interview with Rafael. Worse, Russell discovers that a French spy (played impeccably by Jean-Louis Trintignant) has stolen his film, and the people he photographed in the revolutionary camp are now being picked off. Alex and Russell then go out into the final hours of fighting to get a story, and the National Guard kills Alex. Russell's photographs of the incident (which harks back to the real-life death of network newsman Bill Stewart) become further evidence indicting Somoza when shown on the liberated TV station.

During the victory celebration, Russell runs into the mercenary, and asks him what he's doing there. "It's a free country...or it is now," he says. "You aren't gonna turn me in, are you?" Russell shrugs and walks away with Claire to their taxi to the airport. "See you in Thailand," says the mercenary.

More than just a setting.

There are admirable aspects to *Under Fire*, which was directed by Roger Spottiswoode with the high production values that have come to be standard equipment in Hollywood movies. It vividly renders the feeling of being in the middle of someone else's war. And it doesn't simply use an exotic setting to highlight the romance of the foreign principals (you know, their violence, but *our* sex).

The art direction, by Agustin Ytarte, reflects careful study of Susan Meiselas' photographs from the war, some of which were published in her book *Nicaragua*. (Unfortunately, no credit was given to Meiselas, one of the most courageous journalists to cover that war.) Street barricades, burning cars, sprawled bodies, graffiti-scarred walls and the fleeting sight of young boys and girls wearing kerchiefs all have a nightly-news authenticity.

Further, the film takes sides visually and thematically, beginning with the opening credits, which describe the Sandinista revolution as a mass movement of the Nicaraguan people against the Somoza dictatorship. Little boys, old ladies and even hapless young soldiers testify with their actions to the strength of "the cause." Somoza's world, meanwhile, stinks of decadence and greed. Indoors the camera peers closely at imported scotch and palatial staircases. Outdoors it zooms in on brutalities of the National Guard.

Somoza himself is shown as a stupid and lecherous glutton, a banana-republic buffoon. The double-edged role of international business—which found Somoza too greedy but backed no real social reform—is brilliantly summarized in the

French spy.

Reagan's favorite myth about Nicaragua—that this is a battlefield in the war against Soviet-style Communism—is emphatically countered. A translator tells a journalist, "The world is no longer divided between East and West, but between North and South." Among themselves, the press people find the domino theory a bad joke. Alex even goes so far as to express his contempt for American backing of a "fascist government."

Clear-cut heroes.

Under Fire presents a clear-cut indigenous political struggle. There are good guys and bad guys. The filmmakers obviously searched recent history for such a clear-cut situation, and three years ago they must have thought Nicaragua was a safe bet. Who could be pro-Somoza, anyway? But now, in a political climate overheated with anti-Communist rhetoric, they run the risk of being called propaganda peddlers.

It's ironic, because the movie doesn't defend the Sandinistas out of political partisanship, but because in this traditional Hollywood story, the filmmakers want clear-cut heroes and villains. That way Price's need to take sides instead of pictures is sharpened.

It may be discouraging to realize that when First Worlders finally awaken their consciences to the importance of Third World issues, they not only wear their consciences on their sleeves, but make the central problem one of just where on one's sleeve it should be worn. Discouraging, but familiar. Not just films like *Circle of Deceit* and *The Year of Living Dangerously*, but Costa-Gavras' recent *Missing* and *Hanna K.* engage mainstream audiences by putting a First Worlder's problems in the center of a situation we usually think of as comfortably distant.

This may be a necessary strategy. When a film about the Nicaraguan revolution puts Nicaraguans themselves in the

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The film UNDER FIRE files a sympathetic account of the 1979 Sandinista revolution, but gets some of the facts wrong.

Photojournalist Russell Price didn't take sides in Third World conflicts, just photos—until he visited Somoza's Nicaragua.